

THE POLISH JEW

HIS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE

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TO

MY BROTHER GEORGE

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PREFACE

MANY of the facts put forth in the following pages are so much at variance with accepted opinions of the Polish Jew—both in Great Britain and the United States of America—that I have been advised to preface them with the assurance that they are not the outcome of a short visit to Poland, but the result of eight years' residence in the country. During this time I have had every opportunity of observing the Polish Jew both in the towns and settlements, and have been in contact with the leaders of thought on all sides of the question from the Anti-Semite to the Jewish nationalist. I have witnessed the growth of that revival which has now spread throughout most of the settlements and all the large ghettos of the country, and which has engendered hostility to the Gentile and revolution against the powers that be. The fact that thousands of the men and women here discussed annually emigrate to compete with the English-speaking nations has caused me to investigate their social and economic value the more carefully, both for the sake of the pauper aliens themselves and for that of the peoples among whom they eventually settle.

Warsaw,

August 11, 1906.

ERRATA

There will be found to be some dissimilarity between the spelling of names in the text of the book and in the map. The only important differences are as follows :—

For Petrikau in the map read Piotrkoff.

„ Krakow „ „ „ Cracow.

„ Czenstochow „ „ Czenstochova.

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PART I

THE POLISH JEW OF TO-DAY

THE POLISH JEW

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS—POPULATION—THE TWO GROUPS —THE GHETTO : THE JEWISH SETTLEMENTS

To those whose impression of the Polish Jew is derived from the pauper alien, who see him shuddering, half-starved and weary in the slums of European cities, hustled from pillar to post, gesticulating and gibbering in a strange, uncouth tongue, always in groups but ever forlorn, with noise on his lips and patience on his face ; he appears to be nothing more than an unwelcome stranger, an economic burden, too loathsome to be likeable, too ubiquitous to be interesting. And yet behind those strongly-marked features and restless eyes ; behind that unwholesome countenance and strange jargon, lie the mystery of a great influence and the shadow of a great peril ; for the outcasts who crowd the emigrant ships represent a race that, hated and despised though it be, holds a sway in the Russian Empire it does not wield elsewhere ; a sway, which is the more powerful because it is silent, more dangerous because it is unfelt, more deadly because it has eaten into the very sap of

the community, into the every detail of life and every action of the Slavonic race. Here under the northern skies and in the dominions of an autocratic ruler, in the vast empire of which Europeans know so little ; in this mysterious land of many peoples, where life flows easily and time is of little account, where women rule and men submit, where the Slav dreams and the Semite schemes, the children of Israel play a rôle which cannot but interest the English-speaking race that has seen enough of the Jewish emigrant to fear that his presence, hitherto but a troublesome question, may shortly assume all the proportions of a problem.

But as it is impossible to understand Russia's Revolution without studying her history and character, so it is necessary to understand the Slavonic temperament in order to appreciate the character of the Polish Jew ; for centuries of influence have been brought to bear upon it by the fact that when a Russian or a Pole has a troublesome task to perform, he has grown so accustomed to appeal to the Hebrew that the action has become second nature.

But here a difficulty confronts the Anglo-Saxon. He is too apt, in drawing his conclusions upon current events in Russia, to judge of the people by his own standard, to mentally transport them to London or New York, instead of imagining them in Moscow or Warsaw, influenced by a crowd of local circumstances and by centuries of local history. He is too apt to think of them as Anglo-Saxons in red shirts, or as

Englishmen speaking Polish. And though he has the opportunity of observing the Jewish people from near, he again commits the same error, imagining the English or American Jew removed to the Russian Empire and acting there as he acts in London or New York. He forgets the vast differences of atmosphere, of history, of treatment and environment. He forgets that the Polish or Russian Jew in his relationship to the Slav differs from the English or American Jew in his relationship to the Anglo-Saxon, as the Slavonic temperament differs from the Anglo-Saxon temperament, or the histories of Russia and Poland from the histories of England and the United States. He reads with horror of Jewish massacres and of Jewish persecution; learns with indignation that the Jews are only permitted to inhabit certain quarters of Russian cities and certain cities of the Empire. But has he seen the Jews placed under these restrictions? Has he had an opportunity of observing the methods of the Polish Jews who, living freely amongst a nation in the proportion of one in seven, have attained an influence in the proportion of seven to one? Has he seen the other side of the medal and counted the cases in which the Semite takes advantage of the Slav and the Jew rules the Russian? Has he seen provincial towns solely inhabited by Jews who live upon the surrounding peasantry? Has he seen country estates in which Jews act as middlemen between the proprietor and those who purchase his grain, his potatoes, his horses and cows—nay, his milk and butter?

Can he imagine the capital of Poland, the most civilised city in Russia, the link between Europe and Asia, where every third man is a Jew, where the trade and commerce are in the hands of Jews and where Jewish organisations have openly declared their intention of converting the Imperial army to the tenets of Socialism and of gaining the greatest amount of political influence, when the crisis of crises, the fall of absolutism shall throw the Empire into chaos? And yet these things are facts, and, what is of more importance to the Anglo-Saxon peoples, these facts may, though in a modified form, spring up amongst them. It is true that the mysterious influence and the long unheeded danger of Semite tenacity has been greatly augmented by Slavonic indolence, by the patience of the one race and the unstableness of the other; that alarmist theories are easily concocted when no nation welcomes the advent of the pauper alien, and England, proud of her supremacy, has grown idle and careless in prosperity. But is it not possible that this very indifference may help to develop the alien pauper question into a problem? Although there are a hundred reasons why the Jewish people should not attain the ascendancy in the West they have attained in the East, that strange deceptive ascendancy which looks like persecution at first sight; although the reader may not, and probably does not, believe that in very truth the sons of Israel are the chosen people who shall one day inherit the earth; although there are as yet no grounds for supposing that one third of the population of

London, Leeds, Manchester, New York or Sydney, will shortly be composed of the Hebrew element; although neither Great Britain nor the United States have reason to fear being "swamped" by the Semitic race, yet it is not improbable that even the supreme Anglo-Saxon would profit by observing the methods, customs and character of that wonderful people whom no amount of oppression, persecution or injustice has been able to conquer. That silent defenceless army, though always defeated, never loses, never flinches nor turns back, no matter how strong the fortress or how large the garrison arrayed against it. Always suffering, it is ever victorious; physically cowardly, it never flinches; but, gathering up its scattered forces, stands shoulder to shoulder and man to man, vanquished by all, yet seeing all its conquerors, proud kingdoms and mighty empires though they be, crumble into forgotten dust, whilst it rises once more with eternal suffering and untiring patience, with a mixture of fear and valour, humility and arrogance, to confront younger nations with its insoluble problem. For these reasons I have ventured to place before the reader a few facts relating to the Polish Jew—facts gathered at first hand and proved, whenever circumstances would permit, on the spot; facts which are for the most part of daily, even hourly occurrence, and which I have endeavoured to surround with as much local colouring as will enable him to see them in their natural light.

THE POLISH JEW

TABLE A.—COMPARATIVE POPULATION OF JEWS IN POLAND

GOVERNMENT OF	TOTAL POPULATION	JEWISH POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF JEWS
Warsaw	1,931,168	349,943	18·12
Kalisz	842,398	72,339	8·59
Kielce	761,689	82,427	10·82
Lomza	579,300	90,912	15·69
Lublin	1,159,273	153,728	13·26
Piotrkoff	1,404,031	222,299	15·83
Plock	553,094	50,473	9·13
Radom	815,062	113,277	13·89
Suwalki	582,696	58,808	10·09
Siedlec	772,388	122,370	15·84
Total	9,401,097	1,316,576	14·01

POPULATION.

From Table A it will be seen that the Jewish population is greatest in the governments of Warsaw and least in that of Kalisz. It diminishes in the following manner:—

GOVERNMENT	PERCENTAGE	GOVERNMENT	PERCENTAGE
Warsaw	18·12	Lublin	13·16
Siedlec	15·84	Kielce	10·82
Piotrkoff	15·83	Suwalki	10·09
Lomza	15·69	Plock	9·13
Radom	13·89	Kalisz	8·59

Taking the districts, we find that Warsaw (28·20%) and Lodz in the government of Piotrkoff (25·09%) have the largest Jewish population. In the remaining districts of these governments the Jewish percentage does not exceed 15, so that the greatest proportion is gathered in the two large centres—Warsaw and Lodz.

Taking the statistics for the town populations for the ten governments, we find that the percentage varies between 59 and 28·2, the government of Siedlec giving the greatest and that of Piotrkoff the least, thus:—

GOVERNMENT			POPULATION	GOVERNMENT			POPULATION
Siedlec	...	...	59·0	Kielce	...	...	47·7
Suwalki	...	...	56·3	Kalisz	...	...	42·9
Lomza	...	...	55·7	Lublin	...	...	38·9
Radom	...	...	54·7	Warsaw	...	...	38·8
Plock	...	..	49·1	Piotrkoff	...	...	28·2

It will be seen that the variation of these percentages falls into two natural groups, one following the Western governments on the left bank of the Vistula, the other, the Eastern on the right bank—that is to say, in the Western governments (Kielce, Kalisz, Warsaw and Piotrkoff) the Jewish town population is smaller than in the Eastern (Siedlec, Suwalki, Lomza and Plock). Of the two governments which fall away, Radom and Lublin, the former is to the west but has a larger Jewish population than Lublin; but this is the only exception.

By dividing the ten governments into Eastern and Western groups, we find the following proportions of general and Jewish populations for the towns and suburbs.

	GENERAL POPULATION	JEWISH POPULATION	%
Eastern Group	837,400	408,504	48·4.
Western Group	1,865,446	700,910	37·1.

In the Western group both the general and Jewish population are larger than in the Eastern, though the

percentage of the Jewish in the Eastern is larger than that in the Western. The Western governments are more densely populated, as they include the large industrial centres, whilst the Eastern governments are chiefly agricultural. This predominance of the Jewish element in the agricultural districts appears strange at first sight. One would think that the Jews, by virtue of their business propensities, are better adapted to the industrial centres. This supposition is strengthened by the fact of their large number in the districts of Warsaw and Lodz, the two chief industrial centres of the country. But the truth of the matter is that the average Jew earns a better living in the agricultural districts, not by tilling the soil but by disposing of its produce. Until the latter half of the 19th century Poland was *par excellence* an agricultural country, in which the Jews played the part of middlemen between the producer at home and the consumer abroad. Since the year 1863, however, Poland has gradually but steadily developed her industrial resources. Factories have replaced farms in many districts, and machinery imported from England and Germany abolished a great deal of manual labour. The Jews, deprived to a great extent of their old rôle of factor, have been forced to find other means of living. The lack of good Jewish schools, the restrictions imposed by Jewish ritual, the observance of Saturday as the Sabbath, their dislike for factory discipline, and their aptitude for commerce, are all reasons which prevent them from competing with the Poles in the

industrial world. Once, therefore, they cease to be factors or have not enough means to trade, they resort to the sweating shops and make cheap clothing or turn hawkers in the large towns. Those who happen to be born in agricultural districts can always eke out a living from the squires and peasants. This is why their numbers predominate in those governments which remain chiefly agricultural. Many thousands, unable to earn their bread in the towns, emigrate; their numbers are ever increasing, but the continual exodus does not succeed in decreasing the Jewish population. The average annual increase since 1890 for the whole Kingdom is 2%. But nowhere has it reached such proportions as in the governments of Piotrkoff and Warsaw, where it amounts to 81.1% and 68.2% respectively during the last seven years. These centres have been recouped by Jews from the rest of the Empire. Many so-called *Litvoki*, or Lithuanian Jews, have emigrated to Warsaw and other large centres; many more have come from Moscow and the Russian settlements. The Jewish massacres of 1905 and 1906 sent many to Poland. They cannot all earn a living there, some emigrate, others tax the resources of the Jewish community to the utmost. In fact, it is computed that 80% of the Jewish population belongs to the proletariat, a class which is suffering severely from the economic crisis. It is with these eighty per cent. that the following pages will chiefly deal, for its members fill the emigrant ships and crowd the slums of foreign

cities. Nevertheless the rest of the Jewish community demands brief comment.

The Jewish community in Poland falls into two unequal groups, the smaller one comprising those who have adopted Polish culture, the larger those who have not.

GROUP I

This group again subdivides into two broad classes, the Plutocracy and the *Intelligentia*. The Plutocracy need not detain us here, for its members are as cosmopolitan as those of the same class in other countries. Content to rule the finances of the land, it has as much interest in averting revolution and condemning anarchy as other wealthy classes. Its members are to be seen in the hotels of London, Paris and Monte-Carlo, as far removed in sympathies and sentiments from the children of the ghetto as the fashionable crowds they rub shoulders with. But they are never deaf to an appeal on behalf of their less fortunate co-religionists, and many a charitable institution in the Jewish quarters of Polish towns owes its existence to their bounty.

The Jewish *Intelligentia* is to be found among the ranks of the medical and legal professions to a large extent. As medical men they take a high place and are much respected by the community at large. The general practitioner is practically unknown in Poland; the Jewish doctors are therefore specialists. As such

they keep pace with the times, and being men of liberal education are able to keep *au courant* of the most recent researches and discoveries made by their colleagues in other countries.

As barristers they fill a large portion of the legal list in spite of the restrictions put upon them. Many of them have remunerative practices of a somewhat doubtful character and a few enjoy excellent reputations. But the majority of barristers in Poland, Jewish or Polish, lack that culture which is generally associated with members of the free professions in Western Europe. This lack is more strongly marked amongst the Jews. I know Jewish barristers who receive their clients in their shirt-sleeves in the summer, in a "study" from which the dust has not been removed for more days than a careful housekeeper would like to count. Their reception hours are in the afternoon, after the law courts are closed, and the barristers, eager for clients, appear in the doorway to see who is ringing. Sometimes the flats, dingy and ill-kept, which serve as office and home for the whole family, are literally crammed with furniture that a Bond Street dealer would envy. Old Italian chairs, Dantzig cupboards, and Empire tables which were new when Napoleon went to Warsaw vie in beauty with delicate pieces of china that Macolini himself painted; and yet all these things are crowded together and so dirty that the pleasure which their beauty would otherwise afford is marred by regret that they are neglected. And in the midst of all these

curios sits the *mecenas* (lawyer) himself, as ill-cared-for as his household gods, receiving his clients in their long *halats*. But these are the men, the Jewish lawyers of Warsaw and the provinces, who guide not only Jewish but much Polish thought to-day, for it is they who contribute to the greater part of the newspapers and magazines. The Jewish journalist is to be found everywhere. Not many years ago a Jew edited a well-known woman's paper with clerical tendencies. Not being very sure of the kind of sentiment which ought to prevail in such literature, he used to take the articles to a Roman Catholic priest before publishing them. The priest made whatever corrections were necessary, and the paper flourished until the Jew died and it fell into the hands of a Roman Catholic editor with liberal views. Its circulation rapidly went down.

The Jewish element is most influential in Socialistic and revolutionary literature, and, as we shall see later on, the members of the Jewish *Intelligentia* play an important part in political societies.

The Jewish *Intelligentia* have assimilated more or less with the Polish community. Many of them, even though they have ceased to attend the synagogue and are too intellectually developed to look upon the Rabbis with blind respect, would scorn the idea of embracing Christianity and despise those of their race who have done so. But they have left the ghetto far behind them: nay, they often speak of it with horror. They have exchanged its language for Polish, which they speak and

write as accurately as the Poles, although, as with Peter of old, their "speech betrays them." Those of them who are not Socialists are Polish patriots, looking upon the country as theirs, on its vicissitudes as their own. Such men, whose sons are in their first youth and converts to new ideas, look upon the Jewish Party¹ with antipathy.

It is no rare thing to-day to find these Jewish houses of the *Intelligentia* divided. The older generation is for assimilation, for making the Jew forget the ghetto and its language, whilst the younger deliberately sets itself the task of learning Yiddish in order to reach the Jewish proletariat. The fathers are for the old peaceful times, and the sons for strikes and disturbances. And yet it must not be supposed that either wishes to lose his Jewish individuality; each strives to assert it in his own way, each hopes by his own methods to raise the position of the Jews in the Russian Empire. When the women folk join in the struggle in which one member of the household is for assimilation with Socialism, another for assimilation without, a third for the Social Democrats, a fourth for Sionism and a fifth a leader of the Jewish Bund, the chaos is such as to cause the patriarchs of the family, bred in traditional solidarity, to hold up their hands in horror and ask what will happen next.

An idea of the extent to which the political revival has swept away the old ideas of solidarity among the Jews in Poland will be gathered from the following case which came before the Warsaw tribunal during the

¹ The Bund.

summer of 1906, and in which two Jews accused co-religionists of forcing them to join a revolutionary party.

According to evidence given at the trial, two young Jews, Wasserman and Grosman by name, went to the police with the following complaint. "As we were going along the Torgova at the Brudno (a suburb of Warsaw) several young Jews stopped us and began to persuade us to join the fighting section of a Socialistic Party. When we refused over and over again, the agitators would not let us go on, but threatened that if we were so obstinate we should pay for it with our lives. We went on in spite of these threats, and one of the agitators took out a stiletto and tried to stick it into Wasserman's chest, but Wasserman dodged him and escaped with a tear in his coat. Seeing this, the brother of the would-be assassin pulled a revolver out of a comrade's hand and fired at Wasserman, who escaped a second time, but the bullet hit Grosman in the neck." The two agitators were arrested and charged with attempting to murder Wasserman and Grosman. As it happened, both prisoners were released for want of sufficient evidence. But the interest of the case lies in the fact that Jews rarely bring their quarrels before a Russian tribunal, preferring to settle all their differences amongst themselves.

Quarrels of a more modified form are now of daily occurrence among the Jewish community. Time was when the Polish Jews spent their time arguing about the Talmud; politics have taken its place in modern Jewry.

The Jewish newspapers are full of articles directed against those whose views differ from their own. Half their columns are taken up with abusing their neighbours. The contributors of the Yiddish papers jeer at those who write in Polish, whilst the latter often treat the former with a scorn which might be called anti-Semite but for the fact that both parties are Jewish. Needless to say, these polemical feats are the work of the Jewish editors and journalists. But for the present let us turn to the class the *Intelligentia* is trying to influence, for whose popularity they are bidding, and upon whose support the hopes of more than one political party rest. For this purpose we must bend our steps towards the ghettos of the Polish towns and visit the Jewish settlements scattered over the provinces.

GROUP II

(1) THE GHETTO

(In Poland, when a man launches out into unwonted expenses, his friends ask him "Hast thou killed a Jew?" as if all the Jews were rich and their assassination meant a fortune for him who cared to take the spoils. The working classes have a fixed idea that the Jews, however poor they may appear, have great wealth stored up somewhere or other, and they cling to this illusion, in spite of the poverty of the ghetto, a poverty which exceeds anything the Polish masses experience.

And yet the first impression of the Jewish quarter is not so much poverty as the stifling atmosphere, the smell of garlic and of dirt which pervades the streets and seems to roll from the houses in waves. So strong is it, in the summer months especially, that it seems to be something tangible. In the winter, the cold suppresses it in the streets, only to coop it up in double strength in the rooms where six square feet afford sleeping, living and working accommodation for a dozen people, whose aversion to soap and water is proverbial and whose favourite food is herrings and garlic. And yet, at first sight, the ghetto of a large town will probably disappoint the stranger, especially if he happen to enter it by a large thoroughfare like the Nalevki in the Warsaw ghetto. Here the buildings are more defaced and the shops dingier than those in the Polish quarters. But here, as there, the fronts of the houses are covered, up to the second floor, with boards on which Russian and Polish words advertise the wares to be sold and the names of the merchants. True, the signs are more crudely painted than those in the rest of the town. Here a many-branched candlestick, painted yellow, announces that a silversmith works in the house; there cylindrical masses and round lumps, brown on a white ground, tell the would-be purchaser that Jewish bread is to be sold. A little higher up red, blue and green ostrich feathers, abnormally large and brilliant, announce a feather factory. But it is, with the exception of the candlestick, only what the stranger has seen in other parts of the

town, shabbier and shoddier, but the same. The names over the doors are not Slavonic, for who ever heard of a Polish "Goldwater," "Mothermilk," or "Nut-tree," but they are written in Russian and Polish. No Hebrew signs are to be seen: even the announcement that the Jewish troupe will play in the Muranov theatre, stuck up on the walls of a corner house, is printed in Russian and Polish. The authorities, bent on suppressing all signs of Judaism even in its home, forbid the use of Yiddish for advertisements or announcements. And yet on nearer inspection, the streets are very characteristic. To begin with they are crowded, and the people who pass one another have nearly all the Jewish type. The men are dressed in the long *Halat*, or skirted coat which reaches nearly to the ankles, and the peaked cap, or *Jarmulka*. Some of the younger women have their hair plaited; others wear the hideous wigs of the married women¹ which can be seen like the trophies of some Indian chief, piled up in baskets in the market-place. Every degree of Hebrew beauty and ugliness is here: the stunted boys and girls, the offspring of diseased parents, reared in the poisonous atmosphere of the cellar and the *cheder*;² the maiden with lustrous eyes and rich dark colouring, such as Solomon must have had in his mind when he wrote, "Thou art all fair—there is no spot in thee;" young

¹ A Jewess on her marriage must shave her head and wear one of these wigs.

² Jewish elementary school.

men with Christ-like faces, others with mean ones ; old men wrinkled and calculating, with eyes in which lust for money glints as hard as the golden idol ; old women who look like witches invented to frighten naughty children ; and the white-haired Rabbi who walks with a dignity which proves that he is a learned man and entitled to respect. They are all there. Even in the trams and cabs which pass, the Hebrew prevails. The Cossacks, sunburnt and frowning, are a contrast. They ride through the street, lining both sides of it, in single file, their small rough-coated horses shy at the tram-bells and rush, head in air, among the traffic. The riders, with the muskets in their hands, are ready to shoot at the first sign of an attack. Their linen blouses are nearer brown than white, their loose trousers and high boots shabby. They scowl at the people on the pavements and at the shops as if looking for an excuse to ride among them and plunder. These are the men who only need a sign from their superiors to run wild in Warsaw, plundering and massacring all who come their way ; for not only is the inherent love of looting strong in them, but they are sick of patrol service which means long hours on duty and the risk of a bomb, yet has none of the joys of warfare, where a Cossack may plunder and no questions are asked. Give them the slightest excuse, fire off a revolver or throw a cracker, and they will avenge not only their comrades who have perished at the hands of the revolutionaries, but their own hands and backs stiff

from holding the musket, and aching with long service in the hot sun or the biting frost. The Jews know this, and though they scowl back at them or mutter a word in Yiddish, they give them a wide berth. Even the armed groups of the Bund, who assassinate policemen in broad daylight and think nothing of going up to a couple of sentries and shooting them where they stand, hesitate before attacking Cossacks, for they know that the odd hundred who line the street now would like a *pogrom* more than anything, and that the under officer who is with them could not hold them back, even if he would, once their eager eyes found an excuse for beginning a stampede. These savages of Orenburg inspire fear as well as hatred, and the Jew would be foolhardy indeed who provoked their rage. As to the rest of the crowd, those who have no political aspirations, and the shopkeepers who have wares to lose, they heave a sigh of relief when the Cossacks turn the corner and the last horse disappears from view, for the times are such that a slight incident leads to a panic, and then who knows if the massacres of Bialystok may not be repeated in Warsaw?

Let us turn into one of the side streets. Here houses are dingier and the shops so small that they find enough room in the cellars. The Goya¹ does not buy things in this street, where the commerce is supported by the ghetto population. A lame boy is selling newspapers—you can buy the *Weg*, *Telegraf*, *Freind*, and half-a-

¹ Gentile.

dozen others, but they are all in Yiddish, and even if you have studied it in Western Europe, there will be many words you cannot understand, for it is the most plastic language in the world, and absorbs expressions peculiar to whatever country it happens to be in. This street is comparatively quiet. The windows of the houses are open. Here and there a man, cap on head, looks out into the street; ragged children, their heads and often their bodies teeming with vermin, play gravely. They all look old and wise; they all glance at the European intruder with undisguised aversion. A tram passes on its way to the cemetery which lies beyond the town. The roads are up—they always are in Warsaw—and the rails are so insecurely laid that the tram runs off them when it reaches a curve, and a murmur from the passengers expresses more disapproval than surprise. The driver and conductor descend with the look of men who “expected it,” the passengers show no inclination to get out, and only do so when the driver points out the impossibility of getting the tram back so long as their weight is in it. A crowd of Jews have gathered round, but do not help, neither do the Jewish passengers. The conductor and driver do not expect their aid, and would not give their own if they saw a Jewish carter in the same predicament, unless their tram were inconvenienced by the delay. But the two sturdy Poles push the wheels back again, the passengers get in, the bell jangles loungers out of the way, the tram drives off, the crowd disappears and

silence reigns until the next tram, hurrying to make up for lost time, runs amuck on the same corner. Whenever I hear people in England talk about the fear with which the children of the ghetto look upon the Slav, I think of a tram incident I saw once from my window in Warsaw, which looks out upon a street where a sharp turn causes the trams to derail whenever the wooden pavement wears down. One warm evening, almost every tram which passed had met with the same misfortune, and at last a large one drawn by two horses, skidded close to the kerbstone. The passengers got out, and as it was crowded, rushed back as soon as they could to their places. A Polish girl of about sixteen and a Jewish boy of about the same age disputed the possession of a few spare inches on the front bench. They both nudged and pommelled for some seconds, until the Jew, noticing the girl's smart hat—it was Sunday—found a way of getting his seat. He sprang at the hat, the girl made an unsuccessful dash at his cap; the boy, pushing back her hat, first made a bird's-nest of her hair, then crushed the "creation" between his hands. The other passengers were too busy getting their places to notice the incident; the girl, discomfited, got off the tram, and the Jew set his cap straight and folded his arms with the air of a Napoleon who had conquered Europe.

Let us turn into a busier street, where the sounds of bartering are to be heard. This woman sitting on the pavement with a basket of fish is what the Poles call a

Kupcova, or female hawker. Her wares look as unsavoury as she does, but two or three Jewesses are bargaining with her, one holding a fish up in dirty hands and asking how she could think anybody was so stupid as to pay such a fabulous price for it. Everything in this street looks unwholesome, the people, the shops and the wares. There are no trams, but cars driven by Jews make a noise which forces the passers-by to shout if they want to be heard. Nobody laughs, even the children do not smile; everybody looks patient or angry, but not gay. There is a total absence of street humour, and though all are busy and intent on their work, nobody hurries. The languor, not of cities, but of the ghetto, is upon them, and it shows in their gait as well as in their faces. Here and there a prosperous tradesman in alpaca *halat* and velvet cap is to be seen. His mind is full of his business—he has a bill or two due to-day. That thin man, who is in as near an approach to a hurry as the ghetto can show, is a factor. His Polish client wants money—the interest will be good and the Jew is bent on raising the loan by hook or by crook before nightfall. This youth, with his serge jacket and soft hat is an agitator, on his way to a meeting at one of the factories. He has discarded the *halat* and the peaked cap, but he talks Yiddish fluently and is a good speaker. Now he is pondering over what he shall say to the men. The girl who walks by him is bent on the same errand. Two years ago they were both working in a factory for a pittance.

Now the "Party" pays them a fixed sum for propaganda work. The girl is, if anything, a better orator than her companion, but he has the pull with the pen, which he wields in the Yiddish papers exposed for sale hard by. Neither of them is twenty-one. Those two lads hanging round the bread shop are out of work. They make cigarettes when they can, but the trade is bad and their factory closed for three days in the week. They talk to each other at intervals, but most of their time passes in spitting on the pavement. This man who comes out of the shop leading a small child by the hand is a beggar. His kind has increased during the last two years, but I doubt if his plea is ever refused. The Jews do not let their poor beg outside the ghetto; they provide for their needs within its bounds. That grey-bearded man is a Jew of the old school. His race is dying out, for his children have taken to politics and mix with the world in a way which horrifies him. He has nothing in common with new Jewry. He lives in the Talmudistic atmosphere which still pervades certain parts of the ghetto and reigns in many of the provincial settlements. He has no work, that is to say he does not make boots or clothes, mend fur, or roll cigarettes. He is poorer than such men, his wife supports him by the proceeds of a basket which holds cherries, apples or oranges according to the season, and reposes with the remains of the fruit, under the family bed at night. But even to-day, when the Bund has swept away many traditions and the Talmud is not held in such reverence as of yore,

this learned Jew holds a high place in the ghetto. Nobody hates the *goya* like he, and he would rather suffer hunger than learn to speak Polish. He will ponder for weeks over a passage in the Talmud or a verse in the law, and sit poring over the scriptures long after his family has gone to rest, till the dawn breaks through the window. He knows and cares nothing for the outer world. Even ghetto life does not interest him. He lives with the law and the prophets. Moses is more real to him than the city magistrates and King Solomon than the Tsar to whom he owes allegiance. His great grief is the fact that his eldest boy whom he had destined for a "wise man" has joined the Socialists. But he has his moments of triumph. When a Rabbi comes and consults him about some passage which troubles him, and he answers, finger upon the sentence in question, whilst the neighbours, attracted by the distinguished visitor, listen open-mouthed or gasp "*ai-waj*" ("oh my!"), there is no prouder man in the Russian Empire than this Jew, in his ragged *halat* and lice-infested cap.

Let us go into that cellar where six men and boys are busy at a table on which leather is scattered. The room is so full, what with the cobblers, the furniture, the master's wife and the children, that we can scarcely grope our way across it. Nobody takes any notice of us but the master, who raises his head and asks us something in Yiddish. His looks are not friendly. No, he cannot make you any boots—he's too busy. He answers

in bad German, and, as if to explain the fact, he goes on with his work. Feeling snubbed, you have scarcely time to glance round the dirty room before leaving it. The chief articles of furniture are the red feather beds. All the men and the boys sit in their caps, as pious Jews should, and the little children are taught to keep theirs on. The wife, who is busy by the stove, makes some remarks in Yiddish to her husband, and you feel that it is directed against yourself. Several of the children cough. Little wonder, cooped up in such air, without a park or square to play in. Let us leave them. They will work till late at night, when they stream into the streets to breathe what little air there is. In summer the thoroughfares of the ghetto are crowded from night-fall till the early hours of the morning. One wonders the people do not go to sleep after the long day's work until one remembers the rooms, the beds, the vermin and the crowds of children. But let us go to the market. Our way lies through the same shabby streets, knocking against the same people. Sometimes an incident relieves the monotony of the scene, but it is not often. A large empty cart driven by Jews passes us and pulls up at the corner. Two soldiers, who have evidently been having a lift, rise from its depths. Both of them are drunk—one very much so. They want the Jews to go in one direction, the Jews have business in another. The more sober one tries to persuade his comrade to get out, but the cart is comfortable and the comrade fails to see the point—he is of the opinion that Jews were

meant to take ordinary people where they want to go. He lies down again. The Jews in front of the cart feel uncomfortable and huddle up together. The more sober soldier summons all his energy and tries to pull his comrade out. The comrade objects, and is pulled by the legs—until he reaches the edge of the cart, when he gets a push which throws him under the horses. But the providence which watches over his kind allows him to be dragged out. The Jews look more frightened than ever, for the soldier, feeling aggrieved, draws his sword. But his comrade persuades him to put it back in its sheath, which he does after describing circles in his efforts to find it. No sooner is he clear of the cart than the Jews, whipping up their horses, make off as hard as they can, glad to get out of their dilemma so easily. The soldiers lurch on until they meet an officer, when they grow sober as if by magic, salute, and after he has passed, roll into a cab.

The military are much in evidence in this part of the town. Here a guard of four are taking a man and a woman to the police station. A crowd of Jews follows them. But they too disappear from view, and a few minutes' walking brings us to the market.

The halls are crowded with the Jewish hawkers, who sell everything, from meat for soup to vanilla for flavouring the ices. Their cries rend the air as they walk up and down between the booths, touting for customers and calling upon the "pretty lady" and the "Diamond lady" to buy. Indeed, in this babel it seems as if

everything is to be had for the bargaining which is carried on with Eastern zest and indulged in as a sport in which both sides are prepared to give and take. To the uneducated foreigner it is bedlam. All races are here. There is the stolid Moscovite soldier with his market basket and bicycle buying the dinner for his master. There is the Circassian with his lissome figure and silver *kinjal*. Here is the elegant Polish woman, who, alarmed at the cook's bills, has come to see the prices for herself and perhaps to drive a bargain over some lace or ribbon for which she would pay three times as much in the Polish shops. There is the practical Frenchwoman, owner of some *atelier*, doing her own marketing, basket on arm. There is the working man's wife, buying a few cucumbers or a loaf of bread and looking wistfully at dainties she cannot afford. There is the *chłop*¹ from the country, dazed but economical, bargaining for a pair of boots for himself or a gaudy kerchief for his *baba*.² There are the cooks, male and female, now exchanging the gossip of the hour, now chaffing a Jewish *kupcova* about the quality of her asparagus or the price of her strawberries. They are all here, Pole, Tartar, Moscovite, Frank and Hebrew, all talking at once, haggling, screaming, laughing and swearing. There is something for everybody:—things that can be bought in every European market and things which seem strange to Western eyes. Wigs for the Jewish bride are piled on one basket; veils for the Polish one hang hard by.

¹ Peasant.² Old woman.

Clothes, fish, fruit and meat are all jumbled up together, whilst above the noise is the Hebrew's jargon and the smell of garlic and herring which his soul loves. Here are gathered all the force and wonder of the ghetto, the booths and stalls which feed the whole town and clothe four-fifths of it. Here are the garments made in the sweating shops and the produce of country farms, brought hither by the Jew who dances attendance upon the squire and runs his wife's errands. Here are merchants who haggle among themselves in one language and with their customers in another. Here are the people who have another creed and another hope, whom a thousand years have not changed nor brought nearer to those they barter with, who hold the trade of the country in the hollow of their hands, and who mock by every word and act those who dream of assimilating the Jewish masses. In the provincial settlements their lives are somewhat different.

(2) THE JEWISH SETTLEMENT

A short journey on the Vistula Railway takes the traveller from Warsaw past the fortress of Novo Georvievsk and to the station of Nasielsk. The town is three versts away, and the road runs through an uninteresting country, bare and ill-cultivated, with a few pine-woods scattered here and there. The town stands on a slight incline, only called a hill in this flat district, and the church, a good specimen of what is called

"Vistula Gothic," is visible from the railway. But one wonders why it is there as soon as the town is reached, for the population seems to be chiefly Jewish, as indeed it is, for out of a total population of 5,486, 3,882 are Hebrew. A synagogue adorns the Square which is paved with cobbles, crowded with children, and surrounded by wooden and plaster huts in various stages of dilapidation. There are other towns in which the Jewish element predominates to a still greater extent, in which they form 80%, 85% and even 90% of the total population; but there, it is obliged to take to less congenial tasks, because it cannot live on the Polish element. In Nasielsk the Jews are seen as they could be seen a hundred years ago all over the country, before the rise of industrial undertakings took the place of agriculture. Nasielsk existed when William of Normandy conquered England, and when the *Zamek* (castle) was there, the Jews settled round it to buy and sell and make what they could out of the Polish magnate, who owned the town, the district and its inhabitants. To-day, there is not a trace of the *Zamek* left, the stock of the magnate has long since died out, but the descendants of the Jews who first settled there have increased and multiplied, plying the same trades and observing the same customs for ten centuries. They are to be seen at all times and seasons, lounging at their doors, or leaning out of their windows. On market days they repair to the corner of the Square where the long, narrow peasant-carts are drawn up. A few skinny horses, brought by their

owners from the neighbouring villages, stand together at one side. A few peasants and Jews discuss their qualities to those who choose to listen. There is almost as much noise here as in the Warsaw market, though there are fewer people. There are no soldiers, well-dressed women, or working men's wives; even the squireen, to be seen at all the bigger fairs, is conspicuous by his absence. The elements are reduced to peasant and Jew, and both buy or sell indiscriminately, although the latter seems to have the monopoly of the stalls containing boots and clothing. Here, the art of bargaining is brought to perfection, and for him who understands the language, there is plenty of amusement to be derived from the conversations. The peasant has a stolid way of repeating his opinion of the value of an article with a frankness and a primitive choice of words which is as startling as convincing. The Jew indulges in the metaphors of the East, translated into a nasal Polish which contrasts strangely with the other's pure, Mazovian accent.

That Jew who is haggling with the peasant-woman over a basket of butter will take it to Pułtusk or Warsaw when he has concluded his bargain. She is asking a fair price for it, but he hopes to get it for half a farthing a pound cheaper, and if, by the end of the afternoon, she gives in, he will regret all the way home that he did not propose a whole farthing a pound less. He and the wife of his bosom will discuss it together, and probably she will reproach him for a noodle. So

far, however, the peasant does not mean to give in; she has the butter of the whole village to sell, the other women are harvesting on their own land, and she, too, fears reproaches if she sells it too cheap. The Jew sees this and walks away, to return to the attack later on, for he knows he has no rivals to-day: the woman leaves her basket in charge of her daughter and goes to the far end of the market to hear the price of fowls. The stout Jew in the velvet cap is a corn-factor, Perlmutter by name. His business lies chiefly with the manors around, and he has only strolled into the market to gather a fresh stock of gossip from the Jews who have driven in from Pultusk. Perlmutter is quite a personage in Nasielsk. He has one or two houses, and sent his son to America to escape military service. Mrs. Perlmutter, who is standing in a red wig on the step of the family mansion, a brick, double-fronted cottage one storey high, will tell you with tears in her eyes that her boy is a fine gentleman in America, "so fine that nobody would think he is a Jew." The man in the very ragged *halat*, who has just pulled up his cart in front of Mrs. Perlmutter, is on his way to the station with milk from a manor beyond the town. He is a factor of the poorer sort and a money-lender as well. He has espied a debtor among the group of peasants by the inn, and hastens to see if he cannot get some interest at least in kind. The debtor feels he has given enough interest already, and their voices, as they argue the question, add to the hubbub. So does

the diligence on its way to Pultusk, which the Hebrew youth greets with shrieks of delight and a few choice remarks to the driver, also a Jew, who set up a rival diligence—much to the wrath of Nasielsk, which hires out weird conveyances called *briczkas*. Nobody is busier than the Jewish *szynkarz* or pot-house keeper, who lives almost at the end of the Square. His vodka and sausages are in great request; so is his money, which he lends to his customers at real Hebrew interest. Inside, the emigration agent is talking to the peasants who are wanted for the harvests in Prussia. He promises them a speedy fortune if they will go, and many, tempted by the high wages, agree. They are immediately set upon by one or two who were unfortunate when they went last year, and all begin to quarrel at once. The Jew, seeing his prospects of commission vanish, gets most excited and begins to dance in his anxiety lest the two dissenters should persuade their friends to stay at home. Another agent, of the same race, is talking earnestly in Yiddish to a few Jews at the further end of the cottage. He is hunting for emigrants to America, can get them over the frontier without a passport, and makes a good thing out of it. He has a share in an office in Warsaw, and carries on a big business.

Nasielsk is the commercial centre of the district. Everything bought and sold there passes through the hands of Jews. The richer ones live on the squares and

the poorer on the peasants, who are rarely out of their debt. The poorest inhabitant in the settlement manages to make a living somehow or other, for if he have no money of his own he can go to the lending club, which is quite an institution in these settlements. The richer Jews in the town or village subscribe to it, and though often it does not contain more than a few roubles, it keeps many a Jew from starvation, and sometimes sets them on a commercial career. The treasurer is entrusted with the money, and Jankel or Icek, when burning to exploit a Polish village, and without the means of doing so, goes to him. If his case is considered deserving, he is given a rouble, or even less, to begin with, and told to repay it within a week. Jankel, or Icek, now a capitalist, starts on foot, or begs a lift from a luckier Jew, to the village he thinks will suit his purpose best. There, he goes among the peasants, telling them gossip, looking at their stock, and finding out which is most likely to be his debtor. If he finds that nobody will borrow from him, he will buy some butter or eggs and go elsewhere. But the chances are that some peasant will be glad to have the loan of the money for four or five days. The interest is either deducted at once or taken out in kind, that is, in butter, eggs, or some other trifle, which the Jew will sell elsewhere. With the money gained by the transaction, he buys more stock or puts it out on interest. It is very possible that by the end of the week he will be able to pay back what he took from the club,

and leave the original sum on renewed terms with the peasant, an alternative he prefers, because his interest is safe and his capital too. As soon as possible he will scheme to get a broken-down horse, which would be consigned to the knackers under any other government, from one of the villages. This he will ride until he can hire or bargain for a cart; once in possession of this stock in trade, he is a full-blown factor, with a career before him. Sometimes, though, he is unfortunate or stupid: he lets his small capital lie idle, or places it badly. The week ends and he cannot repay his loan. He is jeered at by his brethren as a fool, and has forfeited the right to draw any more roubles. He goes about with a long face, as befits a man who has fallen in the estimation of his kind, and racks his brains for some new scheme which will re-establish his reputation. He generally manages to succeed, for the Polish peasant is easy prey. Having very little ready money, though he is rarely in want, he hates to part with cash, and readily pays interest in kind without reflecting how much dearer it really costs him. And borrow he must from time to time, for he has taxes to pay, boots to buy, or other expenses, before the sale of the pig has brought him in sufficient money. When a misfortune comes, and the cow dies or falls sick, the Jew is at hand, and so it goes on till the peasant is perpetually in his debt and power.

He and his wife have no idea of the market value of

their dairy and farm produce, for the Jews rule the market and keep their secrets to themselves. In this way the inhabitants of Nasielsk and settlements like them manage to live. They produce nothing, and, so long as they can keep body and soul together by making small sums among the peasantry, will not touch manual labour, which they detest. They are perfectly happy going from village to village and driving small bargains there, and only take to work of another kind as a last resource.

On the whole, they are infinitely better off than their brethren in the large towns, that is, than the proletariat. First, they have congenial employment. Physically, they are stronger, for though their homes are as unsavoury as those of the ghettos, they spend a large part of the day in the open air. Milk is cheap, and they can live better. Cases of consumption and of nervous diseases are not met with so frequently as in the towns. Their wives and children look almost as healthy as the peasants. Of course, when the rural population fails to support them, and they take to sweating, they are very sickly, but in settlements like Nasielsk the peasants are the sponges from which a living can be squeezed. The two elements live in peace, and when quarrelling takes place, it is generally among the Jews themselves, and in consequence of professional rivalry. The hostility of the larger towns is lacking in the agricultural centres, especially where the Socialist

agitator has not yet penetrated. The Jews bow low to the parish priests, tell them the news, buy or sell their cows, and lend them money.

In these districts the Jew is reputed honest, and a man of his word. His high interest surprises nobody—for is he not a born usurer? The convenience of having him shuts his debtors' eyes to his real cost; he robs with discrimination, and if a peasant is the victim of some daring imposture, the chances are ten to one that he has fallen a prey to a non-Jewish swindler.

Quite lately, Nasielsk itself was the scene of a trick, in which the priest was the victim, and an Armenian the impostor. The priest was noted for his bargaining propensities amongst the Jews for miles around, and an Armenian who happened to be passing through the town had heard of them too, and determined to make something out of the knowledge. He went to the priest, and, showing him a ducat, said he had a thousand like it which he had found in the Caucasus, and was willing to sell at a fair price. On being asked the price, he replied that the Jews in Nasielsk had offered a rouble apiece for them, but he was sure they were worth much more. The priest, seeing that the ducat was gold, promised to send it to Warsaw to be valued, and told the Armenian to call again in a week's time, and bring the rest of the ducats with him. The Armenian bowed, retired, and spent the interval in conversation

with the Jews of the neighbourhood. At the end of the week he presented himself to the priest, carrying a heavy pot, which he said was full of ducats. Meanwhile the priest had been to Warsaw with the ducat and found out that it was worth three roubles; but, thinking that an Armenian, fresh from the wilds of the Causasus, would not know as much as the Jews about the value of his treasure, told him it had been valued at two roubles, and that he—the priest—was willing to pay two thousand roubles for the whole lot.

The Armenian agreed, but politely hinted that he would like to be sure that the money was forthcoming before parting with his ducats.

“Of course I’ve got the money,” the priest said indignantly, omitting to add that most of it had been given in his charge by confiding parishioners who were afraid of brigands and had full confidence in him. And in order to convince his visitor that he spoke the truth, he opened the desk where it was lying. It was at this moment that the Armenian, producing a revolver, told the purchaser to part with his money or his life, and swear he would not give the alarm within twenty-four hours. The frightened priest, feeling the cold metal of the revolver on his forehead, did as he was told. A few minutes later he was the poorer by four thousand roubles of other people’s money, and the richer by one gold ducat, worth three roubles, and a pot full of stones from the Nasielsk market-place. He was too ashamed of the

whole thing to tell anybody about the mishap for a few days, when the wily Armenian had disappeared—perhaps to play the same trick upon another priest who loved a bargain.

As to the Jews, they enjoyed it better than anybody.

CHAPTER II

ECONOMICAL POSITION—RELATIONS WITH THE POLISH COMMUNITY

General Remarks.—As the members of the *Intelligentsia* do not merit our special consideration because they do not emigrate; so the Jewish shopkeepers, a large and generally prosperous class, who can make a good living in Poland, need not detain us. Such people do not go to England and America, unless they are in political trouble. The skilled Jewish workman can also earn better wages in normal times; but at present the times are not normal, and the artisan of varying capacity, the member of the land-settlement, the factor, the sweater, the mill-hand, all find it necessary to emigrate nowadays, though the rank and file of those who do so are of the poorest class, incapable of attaining to the low standard which prevails in the industrial world in Poland. The condition of these men when at home will be found in this chapter.

Jewish Land Settlements have existed in Poland for many years. The constitution of 1779 accorded the Jews permission to settle on all crown lands in the

Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania. In the year 1823 the Viceroy of Poland published an order to the effect that they might rent land for life. Several rich Jews took advantage of this concession to rent large farms and settle Jewish families upon them. By an Ukaze published in 1843 Jews were permitted to settle upon all lands belonging to the government. Those engaged in agricultural pursuits were exempted from military service for a certain term of years, according to the number of souls in the settlement; but no family was allowed to own more land than its members could cultivate by themselves, and the employment of hired labour, Jewish or non-Jewish, was forbidden. Between the years 1844 and 1861, 1,345 Jewish families, consisting of 8,927 souls, were engaged in land cultivation in the Kingdom of Poland.

According to the latest statistics, 2,809 Jewish families are now engaged in cultivating a total of 36,000 acres. The registered number of Jews following special agricultural pursuits, such as market-gardening, cow-keeping, etc., is only 4,198, or 30·2 per thousand of the total Jewish population. But, as a good deal of land is rented to them in defiance of the law, it is safe to assume that at least three times that number is so engaged. For the same reason the total amount of land in Jewish hands is about 40,500 acres. The position of the average Jewish agriculturist is not high. Many of them have little or no live stock, and the little they possess is poor in quality. As mere cultivators they are

not successful; it is only when they bring their produce into the market that they outstrip their Polish rivals.

Jewish Labour in the Sweating Shops, etc.—

More than 10% of the Jewish population in Poland is engaged in tailoring, boot-making, stocking-knitting, and in the manufacture of toys, buttons, studs and artificial flowers. Nearly one half (48·5%) of this number is engaged in making shoddy boots, shoes and clothing, which not only find a market at local fairs, but are exported to the interior of Russia. Sometimes the tailors and tailoresses work in shops under a master, but as the master himself can seldom afford more than one room for the accommodation of his family, most of the work is taken home. They are badly paid, and by dint of working for sixteen hours per day, can rarely earn more than £25 a year. A master makes from £25–£30 yearly; in many districts as little as £15 or even less. For instance, 33% earn less than £25, 47% from £25–£30, and 20% over £30 per annum.

After the tailors, the boot-makers are the most numerous. As many as 18,731 Jews are engaged in this industry. This number includes 8,215 masters, 4,314 journeymen, and 4,639 apprentices. The town of Radom produces cheap ready-made boots to the annual value of £100,000. The goods are sent to all parts of the Russian Empire. A clever master boot-maker in Radom is able to earn as much as £50 a year. But taking the total number of masters in the trade, 52% earn

less than £25, 33% up to £30, and only 15% over that amount.

According to the report of the Jewish Colonisation Society, when Jewish tailors and boot-makers are employed in the larger shops they have the reputation for being bad workmen, and are engaged as assistants to the Polish hands, only executing that part of the work which requires a minimum of care and technical knowledge. The guardians of the Society for supplying the Poor with Work in Warsaw strongly endorses this opinion.

The manufacture of shoddy underclothing employs 5,256 Jewish hands, only 572 of whom are men. The chief centres of this industry are in the governments of Radom and Lublin. A mistress seamstress has as many as four workers under her, whereas a master tailor rarely gives employment to more than three men.

Machine-made embroidery gives employment to a large number of Jewesses in the town of Radom. A mistress earns from 16s. to 24s. weekly, an assistant from 4s. to 6s. No men are employed. Jews are chiefly engaged in the stocking industry. A good master sometimes earns as much as £75 a year. The government of Warsaw annually supplies £8,000 worth of stockings to the capital.

The manufacture of other articles of clothing gives employment to very few Jews, but the bristle industry is entirely in their hands. The work is badly paid, and those engaged in it live in the most abject poverty. A Jew can earn as much as £20 per year.

In Russia, where Christian competition is not so keen and there are fewer metal factories, many Jewish blacksmiths are to be found; but this is not the case in Poland. Generally speaking, the highest percentage of Jews engaged in metal industries is to be found among the copper workers, who form 2·5% of the Jewish artisan population. Locksmiths only form 0·9%.

Chemical workers, soap-boilers, engravers and photographers form less than one per cent. of the Jewish artisan population. House-painters, glaziers and bookbinders amount to a little more than 1%. Only 580 Jews are employed in the glove trade.

With the exception of the bristle-makers, the people mentioned above work for fairs and bespoke orders. All their chances of gain are therefore in the proximity of the market-towns. When Jewish settlements are within easy reach of several, the inhabitants are in a flourishing condition; when they are at a long distance from them, the inhabitants earn the best living they can by running errands for the neighbouring *dvori* (manor houses) and lending money to the peasants. The professional knowledge of these artisans is very small: their work is of the poorest quality, unable to compete in any other markets than those of Russia and Poland. The Jewish Colonisation Society has done much good in bringing this fact before the eyes of the better-to-do Jews, and forcing them to realise the urgent need of establishing industrial schools if the Jewish artisan is to hold his own; this commission affirms that, with the

increase of machine-made boots, etc., the demand for Jewish labour has diminished.

Many Jews engaged in tailoring are hampered because they cannot get credit when buying their materials, and often a settlement is obliged to refuse orders from some Russian agent because their workers have not the wherewithal to buy stuff, and the mills will not trust them sufficiently to give them it except in return for cash.

As a rule these men and women, like their brethren in north-western Russia, seize the first opportunity of giving up crafts to engage in commerce or money-lending. Others, as we shall see, rent the gardens of the smaller landed proprietors, sell the produce in the nearest towns, and live through the winter on the profits of the transaction.

In the government of Lublin, where towns are far apart and the railway has not yet penetrated in many districts, the lot of the Jewish artisans is harder than elsewhere. There is little demand for their wares, as the peasants of that government weave and make their own clothing, disdaining to exchange their national and picturesque dress for shoddy clothes made after German patterns. They make everything for themselves but their boots, and the Jewish boot-maker of Lublin, by working sixteen hours a day and sending his wife to the fairs to dispose of his goods, can only manage to make both ends meet in the winter. In the summer he turns gardener or cow-keeper. Even money-lending is less profitable in this government than anywhere else. The

peasantry are prosperous and independent. They have not been demoralised, like those in the frontier districts, by European luxuries, and are therefore satisfied to live on the soil, which is of excellent quality, and to cling to the primitive customs of their ancestors. In the winter the men and women weave, spin and embroider, selling the flax and wool they do not want to the Jewish factors.

Toys for the Polish and Russian markets are made by the Jews in the historical city of Czenstochova. The trade brings this town alone as much as £10,000 annually. The industry was founded by a local Jew, who now sends his wares all over the Russian Empire. Most of them are made in tumble-down shops and hovels under the most primitive conditions. Both girls and men are employed, the girls earning from 1s. 7d. to 3s., and the men from 8s. to 10s. weekly.

These toys, which include children's musical instruments, are copies of cheap German articles. Great solidarity exists among the different toy-makers. None of them will put a new pattern into the market until their colleagues have had an opportunity of copying it. The low price of their goods ensures them a ready sale, though, like all work produced by the Polish Jew, they are unable to compete with those of foreign manufacture. Formerly, the Jews of Czenstochova made the medallion-copies of the famous picture of the Virgin Mary—known as the Virgin Mother of Czenstochova, which hangs in the cathedral and is visited yearly by hundreds of

thousands of pilgrims from all parts of Poland as well as from Galicia ; but they have now been forbidden to engage in this industry. The Jews of Czenstochova are also employed in making fancy buttons, studs, hat-pins, etc., which are sold throughout the Empire as “Nouveautés de Paris.” This work is fairly well paid.

Jewish Labour in Factories and Mills: General Remarks.—The non-Jewish factories and mills in the Kingdom of Poland are, with few exceptions, larger than those financed by Jewish capital. There are no reliable statistics available for the whole of Poland, but those for the government of Warsaw show an average annual turnover of 8,213 roubles for 113 Jewish factories, and 115,987 roubles for 256 non-Jewish factories.

Jews are not employed in chemical works except as packers and sweepers. Their ignorance of the process of varnishing seems to exclude them even from those furniture factories which are in Jewish hands, and which turn out an enormous quantity of old furniture sold by Jewish dealers at high prices to uninitiated amateurs. They are also often excluded from the bronze and lamp factories because they do not know how to draw and are too weak for the heavy part of the work. They are employed in metallurgical works in such branches as do not require any special knowledge.

According to the evidences of the Jewish Colonisation Society, in factories and mills owned by Jews, when the installation of up-to-date machinery demands care and a certain amount of technical knowledge, Jews are not em-

ployed as engineers or machinists. In mills and factories where motors have not been installed and manual labour is still in demand, they are employed in large numbers both in the Jewish and non-Jewish establishments. Fewer Jewish factories are worked with motors than without. The average number of workmen employed in Jewish factories with motors is 71·5, and in non-Jewish factories 13·5.

The percentage of Jewish hands employed in Jewish factories with motors is 18·9, and in factories without motors 43·7. The number of Jewish hands employed in non-Jewish works is very small. In 311 non-Jewish factories and shops furnished with motors we find only 352 Jewish hands employed, and in 140 non-Jewish factories without motors there are 74 Jewish hands registered—that is, less than one Jewish workman per non-Jewish factory.

The following tables will illustrate these facts:—

NON-JEWISH FACTORIES AND SHOPS WITHOUT MOTORS				JEWISH FACTORIES AND SHOPS WITHOUT MOTORS		
GOVERNMENT OF	NUMBER OF FACTORIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF HANDS EMPLOYED	OF THESE THERE ARE JEWS	NUMBER OF FACTORIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF HANDS EMPLOYED	OF THESE THERE ARE JEWS
Warsaw . .	27	605	34	122	3,035	1,580
Kalisz . .	17	181	—	154	1,118	268
Kielce . .	5	74	—	61	1,025	101
Lomza . .	1	9	8	39	276	239
Lublin . .	29	410	23	158	1,750	1,122
Piotrkoff . .	32	944	2	121	3,861	1,394
Plock . .	4	9	—	114	600	245
Radom . .	13	1,647	2	116	1,429	280
Suwalki . .	7	47	—	90	1,673	1,072
Siedlec . .	5	28	5	55	662	417
Total .	140	3,954	74	1,030	15,429	6,718

NON-JEWISH FACTORIES AND SHOPS WITH MOTORS				JEWISH FACTORIES AND SHOPS WITH MOTORS		
GOVERNMENT OF	NUMBER OF FACTORIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF HANDS EMPLOYED	OF THESE THERE ARE JEWS	NUMBER OF FACTORIES	TOTAL NUMBER OF HANDS EMPLOYED	OF THESE THERE ARE JEWS
Warsaw . .	45	9,874	100	72	7,026	2,467
Kalisz . .	20	1,561	8	25	1,282	394
Kielce . .	14	24	1	17	683	62
Lomza . .	2	46	3	22	469	189
Lublin . .	36	874	37	21	245	207
Piotrkof . .	151	27,955	153	166	16,147	1,570
Plock . .	8	102	—	7	81	1
Radom . .	16	1,088	16	20	778	107
Suwalki . .	5	35	5	19	266	119
Siedlec . .	14	412	29	17	605	120
Total .	311	41,971	352	386	27,582	5,236

The reason given by the Jewish Colonisation Society for the fact that Jews are not so frequently employed in mills with motors as in those without, is that they are too ignorant of the technical part of the work. But many employers of labour in the large mills and factories speak most highly of the Jewish workmen and workwomen, and say that it is only their socialistic tendencies which prevent their being employed in large numbers, and that the only complaint they have to make is that they introduce a revolutionary element into the mills. The following notes will enable the reader to draw his own conclusions.

Cotton-spinning.—Chiefly carried on in Lodz, which is called the “Manchester of Poland,” has hitherto enabled that country to rule the market in Russia and the Far East. The strikes, which have been continual since the beginning of the year 1905, have caused much

of the trade to go to Moscow and other Russian centres, which used to be unable to compete with it.

According to the latest statistics, Jewish capital is represented in 40% of the cotton mills in Poland. One of, if not the largest establishment of the kind, is the property of a Jewish family (Messrs. Poznanski and Son). Their mills are said to produce goods to the annual value of 12 millions of roubles, and give employment to over 6,000 hands. Few Jews are employed, and the reason given by one of the firm when asked why he did not patronise his co-religionists was that he did not want to have 6,000 partners.

The woollen industry is almost entirely financed by Jewish capital, though Jews are chiefly employed as weavers. There are 1,625 Jewish weaver shops in the district of Pabianice (near Lodz) alone. Many so-called manufacturers have no mills of their own, but give work to these weavers, who execute it at home, earning from 12s. to 14s. per week. All the small towns and Jewish settlements in the neighbourhood of Lodz are inhabited by Jewish weavers, who work at home—generally without employing assistants. In general, the Jews prefer home work. This is because they dislike factory discipline and prefer to work under much harder conditions at home rather than submit to it.

In the town of Zdunska Vola, not far from Lodz, there are 80 hand-weavers, of whom 64 are Jews, who earn a living by doing work for the "Distribution Offices." The head of such an office, who is paid accord-

ing to the amount of stuff he can procure, gives out yarn to the weavers, together with patterns. Sometimes one of these offices will give employment to a hundred, a hundred and fifty, and even two hundred and fifty hand looms at a time. The observance of the Jewish Sabbath also deters capitalists from employing the Jews in the factories. The Colonisation Society, which makes a point of sending delegates to the factories and mills either financed or worked by Jews, takes a very gloomy view of the Jewish workman, and complains that whereas the Polish workman has made much progress under the guidance of foreign masters, the Jew remains in the same place as he was five and twenty years ago. Many Jews complain that German and Polish masters will not employ them because of Anti-Semitism, even when they are better than their Polish rivals.

One large mill, in which light woollen goods are made, and which is owned by a Jew, only employs Jews and is closed on Saturdays. Other Jewish and German owners say that the Jewish workman is so much more intelligent and learns so much better than the Pole, that they will employ him in spite of the Sabbath observance obstacle. On the other hand, there is one large mill in Poland, financed by Jews, where their co-religionists are only employed for manual labour, although the masters and foremen are Jews.

Many Jewish manufacturers who use hand-loom refuse to employ Jewish labour for economical reasons. The Polish workman takes lower wages, he does not

demand pay for his children's education, as they receive it free of cost, his wife adds to the family income, and both of them work on Saturday. The Jewish hand needs money for the *cheder* (elementary school), his wife does not work, and he himself only goes to the mill five times a week, for it is shut on Sundays and he observes the Sabbath. A Polish hand can therefore manage to support himself and family upon 8s. per week, whilst the Jew needs from 12s. to 14s., and supplements his wages by selling fruit in the streets after working hours, keeping a little unsavoury shop in his room, and lending money to his Polish comrades.

Metallurgical works, which come after the textiles in importance, employ few Jews. Messrs. S. and K., metal workers in Warsaw, are Jews. They employ 135 hands, of which 110 are Jews (95 men and 15 women.) The machinists are Poles with one exception. The Jews work as journeymen; neither the specialists nor masters are Jews. The owners of the works say that their Jewish hands have no technical knowledge of their work because the large establishments owned by Christians, the only places where they could learn the trade, refuse to employ Jewish labour. The works are open on Saturdays and Sundays. A few years ago Jewish masters were employed, but Messrs. S. and K. replaced them by Poles, because the Jews worked only four and a half days weekly, and demanded pay for the whole week. They naturally did not work on Saturdays; on Sundays it is the time-honoured custom of the masters

to take a holiday, and they left much sooner than the other employés on Fridays.

At another Jewish works, where the manufacture of boilers for sugar refineries is a speciality, 325 men are employed, 125 of whom are Jews. The master, a Jew, says that his co-religionists are clever copper workers, and as such often find employment in non-Jewish factories. When questioned about the Jewish men under him, he said that they had three grave faults—they shirked their work, interfered with things which did not concern them, and were too indifferent or conceited to compete with better workmen.

The metal-plate works employ Jews for manual labour only; they are excluded from all work in connection with the machinery. Mr. E., lamp manufacturer at Warsaw, a Jew, employs 200 men, of whom 100 are Jews. This gentleman said he was not satisfied with his Jewish hands, who were too ignorant to varnish and physically unfit for the heavier work. He affirms that the Jews not only know nothing about this industry, but are too self-satisfied to learn. For this reason they earn much lower wages than the Polish hands. The Jews employed by him are nearly all unable to read or write Polish, or to draw—a defect in their education which places them at a great disadvantage. The Polish workmen earn from 32s. to 50s. weekly, the Jewish from 20s. to 22s. No Jews are employed in the cast-iron section of the works.

Messrs. F. and M. (Jews) own a metal works at Warsaw

which gives employment to 110 hands, of whom 70 are Jews. The verdict given by the owners is that the Jews are less accurate than the Poles, and work better when paid by the piece. Here they work in their caps, and pray at intervals during the day. The varnishers in these works are all Jews, and very poorly paid.

One Jewish furniture manufacturer said he did not employ his co-religionists for varnishing and polishing because they do not know their work sufficiently well. They are employed in other parts of the factory.

In the *cigarette and cardboard-box* trade we find a demand for Jewish labour. The cardboard-box makers in Warsaw are all Jews. They have organised a kind of guild with which a savings bank is connected. Lectures are delivered in Yiddish two or three times a week. A Jewish cigarette-maker works much quicker than a Pole, turning out 2,000 pieces to the others' 1,500. The Jews generally work at separate tables but in the same room. They are paid from $8\frac{1}{2}d.$ to 1s. per 1,000. The paper sheaths are made by the women and children and filled by the men. Sheath-makers are paid about 1s. to 1s. 3d. per 1000, earning from 2s. 6d. to 10s. weekly. Many of these factories, though owned by Poles, are closed on Saturdays as well as Sundays.

The *tobacco factories* employ Jews almost exclusively. One of the largest firms of the kind, The Brothers Polakievitch, employs 650 Jewish hands, including 358 women. The cigar factories only employ Jews to make the cheaper sorts of cigars. The reason given is that

the Jewish workmen are slipshod, and often spoil the goods. The good Jewish workmen leave Poland to go abroad, where they can earn higher wages.

The manufacturers of *cheap neckties* almost entirely engage Jewish labour. Girls and women take the work home. The forewomen who distribute the work earn about 16s. a week; the others considerably less. They are paid by the dozen.

The *straw-hat industry* is almost entirely in Jewish hands. The work is precarious and badly paid, the season short. The Jews employed in the summer do not make the winter hats, as they are not sufficiently strong to press the felt and beaver shapes.

This industry, owing to the strikes and foreign competition, has greatly declined during the past two years. The hands are paid by the meter of straw. Thirty meters brings a girl in from $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ to 1s. 8d.

The manufacture of *artificial flowers*, which has developed by leaps and bounds at Warsaw of late years, gives employment to Jews and Poles, the Poles executing the more delicate part of the work, and the Jews making the foliage. Women can earn about 1s. a day, and men from 6s. to 20s. weekly, but the season is short and the trade precarious, especially since the strikes and disturbances have driven many good customers elsewhere.

In the *ready-made underlinen factories* at Warsaw 256 men are employed, of which number 193 are Jews. Poles are engaged to attend to the steam-motors, as

the Jews, by reason of their lack of sufficient physical strength and technical knowledge, cannot be entrusted with the work.

In all the factories and shops investigated—with one trivial exception—the Jews and Poles work side by side in perfect amity. The exception was due rather to political than racial reasons, as there were no Socialists amongst the Polish hands. In fact, politics, whereas they bring the representatives of rival parties to blows in many of the mills and shops, have served to bind the Jewish and Polish workmen closer together. One common cause has bound them, and that is Socialism. When a party of National Democrats springs up in a factory they have to confront not only the Jewish Bundists, but the Polish Socialists as well; and the adherents of the Bund, the Polish Socialists and the Social Democrats will join forces against the common enemy, no matter how lustily they fight over their own shades of political opinion at meetings.

Between these factory hands and the inevitable Jewish factor there are huge numbers of Jews in Poland who produce nothing, because they lack even the most primitive forms of technical knowledge, which condemns them to perform the heaviest tasks for the lowest possible wages. Such men become the hewers of wood and bearers of water, the porters, carters, raftsmen, hop-gatherers, and rag-sorters of the community. They form nearly twenty per cent (19·6) of the Jewish population, and as their lives are very miserable make good revolu-

tionary material. The advent of the long winter generally puts an end to their labours and to all means of earning the scanty fare which keeps their bodies and souls together. Jewish benevolence does what it can for them, but these poor wretches, whom a very average elementary education would place beyond fear of starvation, are a terrible weight upon their co-religionists.

This portion of the Jewish proletariat is in a far worse position than the class with which we must now deal, the class of middlemen and factors who live upon the Polish population, and, by reason of the Polish character, have become a regular institution not only in the towns but in every village and hamlet throughout the country. Sometimes they are wealthy, and dream of a brilliant career for their sons; sometimes they have no more capital than their mother-wit, which enables them to create a commercial monopoly in the villages they have chosen for their labours. Sometimes they only lend money to the peasants, sometimes their capital will allow them to supply the squires with it. But whatever class of the Polish community they may be useful to, they are always there, an inevitable feature of the Polish landscape, subservient, guttural, gesticulating, and useful.

THE POLISH COMMUNITY AND THE JEWS' RELATIONS
WITH IT

Nine millions of the Polish population belong to the working classes, two millions being employed in factories and works, and seven millions on field labour. Of the last, three millions are entirely without land, and the majority of those peasants who have small holdings cannot support their families thereby. These holdings vary in size from a little over three to thirty acres. The well-to-do peasants possess as much as fifteen and even twenty acres, but the average amount is three, which with the cottage and live stock is worth about one thousand roubles.

Owing to heavy taxation and his inferior husbandry, it is as much as a peasant can do to support himself and family upon fifteen acres. Very many of them have therefore to send their children to work on the neighbouring manor. Failing such employment they temporarily emigrate to Germany and even to America, whence their savings are sent home, and are, if times are good, the means of augmenting the family acres. Very often the wife is left to till the land with the aid of a younger daughter whilst the men-folk emigrate for a few years.

Many of those who possess no holdings find employment on the manor lands, earning from 30 to 40 roubles annually in money. In kind they receive $35\frac{1}{2}$ bushels of corn, 71 bushels of potatoes, the use of 110

square yards of land for growing potatoes, the same amount for the cultivation of flax, which the women spin into coarse linen for shirts; 20 feet of wood or its equivalent in peat, and the right to keep one cow on the manor pasture.

If the *parobek*, as this farm labourer is called, has a son or daughter old enough to go to work, the earnings in money and kind are augmented to the value of 100 roubles yearly. Since the agrarian disorders, when strikes took place in many districts, some of the peasants have obtained better terms from the landowners, including 40 roubles in money, an increased allowance of corn and potatoes, and the right to pasture two cows on the manor. But such conditions are exceptional, and the *parobek* rarely earns more than 35 roubles a year.

As it is impossible for all the peasant proletariat to find employment in the country, migration to the towns is constantly increasing. This did not matter so much when trade with the Far East, Poland's largest market, was in a flourishing condition, and good harvests kept the prices of food low; but this trade was paralysed as soon as the Russo-Japanese war broke out, and manufacturers were obliged to discharge many of their hands. The condition of the working classes was rendered still more deplorable in 1904 by the bad potato crop and an epidemic amongst pigs, which not only brought the rural population to the verge of starvation, but increased the cost of living for the urban proletariat,

whereas wages remained the same or were altogether lost in consequence of the industrial crisis.

These causes all tended to swell the ranks of the indigent and increase the influence of Socialism, a fact which did much to develop the activity of the Bund, as the reader will see later on.

The remainder of the Polish population consists of a small aristocracy, a large nobility and a rapidly increasing *Intelligencia*.

The aristocratical class is unpopular with the nobility and *Intelligencia* alike. This is partly owing to the rôle it played in the partition of Poland, and partly to its general cosmopolitanism. With the exception of the late Marquess Wielopolski, few members of the Polish aristocracy take any real interest in politics; but since the present political revival, which swept over the Russian Empire at the opening of the Russo-Japanese war, and affected Poland more than any other portion of it, most of them have joined the National Democrats, in order, their enemies affirm, to regain their long-lost popularity.

Practically every Pole who is not a peasant is a *szlachcic* (nobleman). He may be the proud possessor of two or three thousand ancestral acres, or he may eke out a beggarly existence by copying barristers' briefs; but, rich or poor, his nobility and his crest are the pride and the consolation of his life. Indeed, they often prevent him from working, even though his estate be so heavily mortgaged that it is to all intents and

purposes in the hands of the Jews; and if he does drift to the *Intelligentia* and engage in a profession, he considers it a point of honour to do as little as adverse circumstances will allow. He is in his element in the country, where the size of his estate varies from 180 to 1,500 acres, or, according to his reckoning, from six to fifty *włoki*. But the average size of the estate of a country *szlachcic* is about thirty *włoki*, valued at from three to five thousand roubles a *włoka*, but which, were it put into the market to-morrow, would not bring him a fourth part of this sum, so heavily is it mortgaged. The manor house or *dwor* is old, low-roofed, and generally built of wood. Sometimes it contains an upper storey, but as a rule all the rooms are on the ground floor, communicating with each other. Balconies, covered with roses and creepers, form the family lounge in summer, and fitted with double windows keep the cold out of the house in winter, when the rooms are heated by means of high white stoves. The lady of the manor passes her days in her dressing-gown, busied with her garden, home, and children. The lord, booted, collarless and unshaven, drives about his estate and converses with his Jewish factors, who bring him the news, do his business for him, and without whom he would not sell a bushel of corn or a quart of milk.

Far from town and post office, life flows easily in these *dwori*, where hospitality is unlimited, and Polish customs are clung to with a tenacity unknown in the cities. In politics the country *szlachcic* is a patriot,

and to-day he has thrown in his lot with the National Democrats.

As the superfluous peasant population helps to swell the ranks of the urban proletariat, so do the sons and daughters of the poorer landowners add to the ranks of the *Intelligencia*. Once members of this class and residing in Warsaw or some other large town, their patriotism is tinged with Socialism, even if they do not join the Social Democrats or become members of the Polish Socialistic Party. As students they do much propaganda work amongst the urban and rural proletariat, now an object of interest for patriot as well as Socialist; though the Socialists gained considerable influence over the working classes during those years when the country squire sadly pondered over the failure of the last rebellion. The *szlachcic* who leaves his patrimonial estate to seek a living in the towns can only become a lawyer, doctor, engineer, architect, clerk or tradesman, for owing to his nationality the civil service, a Russian monopoly, is closed to him, and his patriotism forbids him to serve in the Russian army in any other capacity but that of a conscript. But neither in the free professions nor in commerce does the Pole distinguish himself. He lacks that punctuality and power of attending to details which alone can insure success in any branch of work. His broad Slavonic nature hates drudgery, and longs for change and amusement. As a professional man he is apt to ignore his reception hours or forget to attend to a case at the

proper time. As a merchant he treats his customers in an indifferent manner which indicates that he, as a *szlachcic*, pays them a great compliment in consenting to sell his wares at all. It is not that he is lacking in intelligence, far from it. His wit is equal, if not superior, to that of the average Anglo-Saxon. In spite of bad Russian schools and all the disadvantages of being ruled by a government whose culture is inferior to his own, he manages to cull a good all-round education, for, unlike the Englishman, who is too apt to think that what he does not happen to know is not worth knowing, he applies himself to the pursuit of a very catholic kind of knowledge, aided by good and cheap books. This lack of sterling business qualities is united with the want of what is best described by the word "grit" in the Sclavonic temperament, in its idle, easy-going good nature which will not make the effort to be at the office punctually in the morning or send work home within a week of the date for which it was promised. How far this trait has been developed by the presence of the ubiquitous Jew, ever ready to run an errand, perform a tiresome task or lend money, it is difficult to say, but it is there, and forms one of the reasons why the Pole, no matter how poor he is, can always give a Jew the wherewithal to buy his daily herring and garlic. Another reason lies in that desire of the shopkeepers and craftsmen to make their sons "gentlemen," to give them an university education and send them to swell the already overcrowded ranks of the free professions. This in-

satiable desire to mimic the *szlachcic*, and the inherent tendency of the Pole to avoid trades and crafts, has two effects. The first is to fill the Warsaw University and the higher schools with lads whose lives are a perpetual struggle to pay the fees and keep body and soul together by coaching small boys and girls; the second is the production of an army of incapable craftsmen, who are either too dull or too poor to dream of higher education, and too careless of their trades to try to excel in them.

What the Pole lacks in business capacity and moral courage the Jew possesses to an extraordinary degree. True, the ease, the grace, the charm of manner and of person are not his. His gait is awkward and his feet ungainly; no matter how fluently he speaks the language of his adopted land, his very accent betrays him. He brags and boasts, talks through his nose, talks against his race; is arrogant, self-opinionated, conceited and shy. When fortune smiles upon his strenuous efforts, and his money admits him to the society of the Polish *szlachcic*, he too often becomes a snob. But though he frequents their society, he is uneasy in it; for he knows he cuts but a sorry figure mounting a horse or handling a gun. But he is rich, and rich or poor, he is both of the least account and of the greatest power, for he has crept into every Polish household from the palace to the manor, from the farmhouse to the cabin. Nay, more than that. Were he to make a mark on all his hands have touched, not a field or

pasture, not a brick or stone, not even a beast of burden but would bear the trace of the despised son of Israel.

It is characteristic of the Polish nature that anti-Semitism does not prevent the Jew from earning a living in those very pursuits for which he is most detested. It is astonishing to find how many members of the aristocracy and richer nobility employ Jewish lawyers to superintend their affairs. They are, they affirm, excessively anti-Semitic, because they consider that the Jew is the cause of all the misfortunes Poland suffers, and especially of the anarchy which prevails. But they cannot take the trouble to put their affairs into the hands of a Pole because he worries them too much about formalities and will not get the business done in the time required, whereas a Jew does it all without any trouble and has a knowledge of the by-ways of the law which enables his client to sail close to the wind without running any real risk. "I can go to Monte Carlo with a quiet mind," the Pole will remark. "I know my case is in safe hands, and if he overcharges me, he does it in such a way that I never find it out." His wife, equally anti-Semitic, buys her laces and ribbons not at a Polish shop, but in the Jewish quarter, because the prices are lower. The average Pole is always in need of ready money, and generally pays dearly for it. Every Jew in Poland is more or less a money-lender, so the anti-Semites affirm; and though the statement is exaggerated, I doubt if any country is such a happy hunting-ground for the Hebrew usurer, from the rich Jew who

has bought a title from the proceeds of his usury to the ragged inhabitants of a Jewish settlement who borrow a rouble for a week to "speculate" with among the peasantry. The following incident, which is not only true, but one of many similar instances, will illustrate the happy-go-lucky way in which the Pole will burden himself with debt—

X——, a *szlachcic*, of course, and with nothing but his gambling propensities and his crest to live upon, needed 1,800 roubles. He sent for a Jew who happened to be possessed of that sum, and who agreed to lend it to him on condition that he paid five roubles interest daily and did not return the money for at least a year. X—— agreed, the money was counted out, and the debtor went to his club. On leaving it next morning he was accosted by the Jew, who bowed very low, enquired if the illustrious gentleman had had good luck, and asked for the five roubles. It was so every morning. No matter where X—— played, the Jew was awaiting him as he left to go home. When he had been fortunate he gave the five roubles lightly enough, when he lost he relieved his feelings by using strong language; but the interest was always forthcoming even when the debtor was obliged to go without his dinner. At the end of the year the Jew eagerly renewed the terms. Many years have now elapsed since the bargain was made, but the Jew does not fail to apply for his five roubles every morning, and X—— calculates that the loan of 1,800 roubles has cost him many times that amount.

The reader has already seen how the Jews in the country settlements eke out a living by lending small sums of money to the peasantry. But these are not the only ones to live upon the Polish community, producing nothing but ever busy hanging around the palaces of the magnates and the hut of the clodhopper alike. None are so ubiquitous as the "factors" who spend their days in squires' farmyards and stables. The Jewish factor is quite a feature of Polish country life, and there is a Polish proverb to the effect that if you throw him out of your door he will crawl in by the window.

One meets him at every turn ; when the corn is only a few inches high he buys it from a needy squire, paying half the sum agreed upon at once. The potatoes often are his before they have flowered. He buys the produce of the land at a risk, and the squire does not get a fair price for it ; but as he wants ready money above all things, he does not think of the consequences. Ninety per cent. of the country estates in Poland are managed in this way, and the Jewish factor has become so ingrained into the system that I doubt if the most independent and energetic farmer could altogether do without him.

He knows everything that passes in the estate he frequents ; when a cow is to be sold, a horse gone lame, or a mare foaled ; he will buy everything from eggs to a cart-horse, from lumber to the *dvor* itself, for if he has not the wherewithal to make the purchase, he has cousins

or brothers in the neighbouring settlement who will take part in the enterprise. He and his tribe are ever to be seen about the *dvor*. If they are not in the stables, the cow-house, or the dairy, they are sure to be found in the neighbourhood of the granary, or even further afield, observing the wheat or the barley with calculating eyes. When the squire and his family are at dinner the mad barking of the dogs, followed by shrill protests and the sound of a stick beating them off, announces the arrival of Jankel or Szmul or Mordka, who shows his tattered cap and greasy *hałat* on the verandah a few minutes later and asks the illustrious gentry if they have nothing to buy or to sell. Each *dvor* has its own clan of Jews, from the corn factor who drives a trap and owns a villa in the nearest town and could buy his Polish patron out of house and home, to the ragged wretch who tramps to market to buy necessities for the peasantry and smuggle in a forbidden pamphlet. The meat is brought twice a week to the manor by the Jewish butcher, a flourishing man, who keeps the monopoly for himself and his brethren. More than once the mayors in the provincial towns have attempted to place this profitable business in the hands of non-Jewish butchers; but when the Jewish population predominates, the attempt invariably fails. The Jewish factors, by buying up all the cattle on the neighbouring estates, have absolute control of the market and refuse to sell a single head of cattle to their non-Jewish rivals, who are obliged to put up

their shutters and leave the field to the Jew, who, as meat is scarce, does not fail to tyrannise over his customers.

I remember that whilst spending the summer in the country a couple of years ago a culinary revolution was caused by the butcher, who sent some very unsavoury meat—the English consumer would call it skin and bones—which the housekeeper indignantly returned, remarking that “The illustrious gentry would not poison themselves by eating suff stuff.”

“Won’t they?” the butcher said, when his journeyman returned with the message, and told his brother butchers, who boycotted the *dvor* in question for the rest of the summer, whilst the “illustrious gentry” humbled themselves upon poultry until the advent of the partridge season relieved the monotony of ducks and chickens.

The Jew who makes boots and shoddy clothing in winter often turns gardener in the summer. When the orchards are still bright with blossoms he tramps round to the smaller manor houses and offers to rent the garden for the season. If his offer is accepted, he counts the trees, looks at the bloom, and offers a certain sum, bargaining from 25 to 40 copecks per tree. He agrees to give a certain measure of fruit and vegetables to the manor free of charge; if more is required, it is paid for at a fixed rate. Half the rent is paid at once, the remainder to be given when the fruit has been gathered

and sold. Sometimes a contract is written, but such formalities are rarely indulged in. A day or two later the Jew returns with his family and feather beds and takes possession of a hut in or near the orchard. If the season is a good one, all goes well; if not, he appeals to the lady of the manor to release him from his debt, swearing upon the graves of his grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles, aunts and deceased cousins that he will hang himself, his wife and offspring, if "the great and illustrious gentry" bring him to ruin by their hard-heartedness. At first the request is refused, for the squire's wife knows how many cart-loads have left the garden for the neighbouring town, and she tries to get at least a portion of the rent owing to her. But the petitions and threats of suicide are repeated by the gardener and his family until the "great and illustrious lady," alarmed at the prospect of beholding curly-haired Jews and Jewesses dangling from her apple-trees, gives in, and peace is restored. When the squire is asked why he will not employ a Polish gardener to look after his orchard and sell the fruit himself, he answers that it is too much trouble, because nobody will do the packing in the country or control the sale in the town, and that the Jew and his numerous family, aided by mongrel watch-dogs, keep intruders from the orchard, whereas the Polish gardener would let the peasants roam in the garden and help themselves.

The milk market, as we have seen, is almost entirely

in the hands of the Jews, who rent the produce of the dairy as they do that of the orchard and kitchen garden. So it is, from the farmyard to the cornfield. The Jew rents everything and buys everything; he is always on the spot, pays, at any rate, a certain amount of ready money, and saves the landowners a great deal of trouble. He has, too, a fund of information for everybody. He is a walking news-letter. Not only does he know what is passing in the neighbouring town, in the nearest garrison, what the Russians are saying, how many horses are being sent out of the regiment, how much they cost and what they are worth; he has news from Warsaw, aye, and from Petersburg too. It is to the Western mind rather amusing to hear the squires solemnly discuss some impending change in the government which Mordka, or Szmul or Perlmutter, the factor, has told them of, but which generally comes to pass in the way the Jews have predicted. For the rest, the *szlachcic* likes to hear the Hebrew gossip. The roads are bad, neighbours far off and posts irregular. Time often hangs heavy on his hands, and he listens with interest to what the corn factor heard about the governor of the fortress, how much he made over the last building contract, how many blankets were missing from the last consignment, how the priest was cheated over his new cow, or why the peasantry broke the windows of the unpopular squire in the next parish. The Jew knows all these trifling details, because his brother or cousin or wife's

cousin is a factor too, and goes to the garrison and the fortress.

The Jewish factor and his tribe move freely amongst the soldiers, selling them little luxuries and gossiping. It is often they who distribute the revolutionary pamphlet urging them to join the "movement for liberty" by shooting not at their own people, but at their officers. It is they who supply the materials whilst the fortresses are being built and the necessities for the inhabitants when finished. It is they who sell the fodder for the horses and the rations for the men. The secrets of the commissariat are theirs; they know how much the governor and his staff make over the contracts and the difference between the sum the government is charged and that paid to them. Sometimes the factors have an opportunity of profiting by this knowledge to the discomfiture of the authorities. Soon after the failure of the Moscow revolution, in December 1905, some members of a certain Socialist party were arrested in a large Polish town and sent to a neighbouring fortress. They were necessary to the party they led, and there seemed little prospect of their being set at liberty, or even of undergoing their trial before the court-martial for some time to come. But the ways of revolutionaries are wise, and within a few weeks it was announced that the five Socialists had left the fortress in broad daylight after presenting the sentries with discharge sheets signed by the military governor

and bearing the official seal. The general public once more wondered at the adroitness of the Socialists, whose experts forge signatures and seals so well. But the annals of the party in question tell a different tale. Amongst the Jewish factors who frequented the fortress was a member of the party. He went to the governor one day under pretext of selling corn, and quietly proposed that the five prisoners should be released.

"These are, as Your Excellency is aware, very important men in their party," the Jew explained. "I would not disturb you for men who mean little, but these are wanted. All you have to do is to sign the discharge sheets and give them to me. You will not appear in it. I will do the rest, and your signature will be looked upon as a good piece of forgery. As to the seal of the office, our party has already one in its possession."

At first the governor was very angry, and refused. The Jew did not speak for a few moments, and when he did, he said, "The governor of the fortress at O—— also refused a similar request, but the Jews denounced him at Petersburg, sending in the accounts for the corn supplied to his fortress and showing how much he had made over them. Your Excellency knows that that governor was dismissed from his post. I will see Your Excellency again in a few days."

The factor called in a few days, and the governor signed the discharge sheets. The factor and he understood

each other, and their business relations, thanks to the fate of the governor of O—— fortress, have not been strained.

But every political offender, even though he be a Jew and guilty of nothing worse than distributing revolutionary literature amongst the soldiers, does not slip through the hands of the military authorities. Sometimes the soldiers themselves arrest them, and when tried by courts-martial they are generally sentenced to lifelong exile in Siberia for more serious propaganda. Very often their fate is settled on the written evidence of one soldier, who does not appear because he is on duty. This seems grossly unjust to those who are accustomed to think that a man is innocent before his guilt has been proved. In both political and civil cases the Russian tribunals too often assume that the prisoner is guilty and hear evidence as a mere matter of form. Jews, on account of their reputation for cowardice, are frequently subjected to different forms of cruelty in order that they may confess to having participated in a crime, whether they have done so or not. The following case, which came before a Warsaw tribunal in April, 1906, will illustrate this fact, and though it has no connection with factors, the reader will forgive the digression for the sake of the light it throws upon the way in which the poorer Jews are treated when they come under the shadow of the law.

On the morning of the 19th of June, 1905, a policeman was shot in one of the Jewish market-places in Warsaw,

known as the Janasz market. The place was crowded, and though many market women were standing close by at the time, the perpetrator or perpetrators escaped. The detective appointed to watch the case, a man named Ivanoff, worked hard to discover somebody who would admit having witnessed the crime, and finally found a Jew, Israel Nordwind, a boy of seventeen years old, who fell into his hands quite by chance under a charge of theft, and who confessed to have seen four Jews—whom he named—fire at the policeman. He also affirmed that when the man lay upon the ground one of them returned, let off a parting shot, crying in jargon "*Fama blit*" (for my blood). But when the case came before the central criminal court, not only did the four accused deny their guilt, but Nordwind, the chief witness, retracted every word of his former evidence, saying that he had given it at the suggestion of Ivanoff, who promised that if he did so he would be acquitted of the charge upon which he had been arrested. Other witnesses were then called. But one had escaped to London, another, emboldened by Nordwind's statement, affirmed that she knew nothing about the murder, but had been imprisoned for nine days and forced, under pain of tortures and the rack, to give evidence against the prisoners. The Procurator ordered the prisoners to be discharged, but the police re-arrested one of them before night, and only released him upon a fresh order.

Ivanoff defended himself by saying that he was

morally convinced that the four Jews in question had killed the policeman.

But to return to the factors. They are to be found in the towns in even greater numbers than in the country. There, too, they buy and sell everything for other people, from corn to tickets, from dust to diamonds. They know where stolen goods are to be bought cheaply, and sell smuggled merchandise at a low price. They place money on mortgages and on horses. They buy and sell lottery tickets, theatre tickets, opera tickets. If you have any difficulty about booking a seat to hear a favourite singer, though all the places are sold and the box office closed hours before, the obliging factor is always to be found in the neighbourhood, touting for customers, who buy his tickets at a high price. Do you want to send a message to a friend in prison, to buy a horse, to buy old furniture, to borrow anything, from money to a passport, if you find yourself in a plight, and under the Russian government this situation is by no means unusual, all you have to do is to send for the Jewish factor, and, though he always meets your request with "It can't be done," to raise the pecuniary value of his services, he will do it, if anybody can. When he fails there is no hope.

It is, in short, the Jew who goes everywhere and does everything. Unnoticed and unknown, he holds the secrets of a thousand houses, of a hundred affairs, and the ins and outs of a score of fortresses. Above all things

he knows when to speak and when to be silent, when he can afford to be insolent and when he must be subservient. Little wonder that the Pole cannot do without him, for he has been filling his present position for so many centuries that he has become an indispensable feature of the national life.

One more instance of the way in which the Jew manages to live upon the Polish population by his wits, and I am done with his "back door" influence.

A certain Jew owned a large house in Warsaw, which he was in danger of losing because he had a debt of ten thousand roubles upon the property without the means of paying it off. So he organised a private lottery amongst his acquaintances, issuing one hundred tickets at a hundred roubles each. The tenements of the house, which is situated in a densely populated Jewish quarter, always let well, and naturally the tickets were eagerly bought up, for who would not like to win a house worth fifty thousand roubles for a mere song? The day for drawing the lots at length arrived, and all the ticket-holders anxiously awaited the issue. But when the happy winner claimed his prize, the Jew said: "No, I cannot give you the house; the house belongs to me. If your greed has deluded you I am not to blame. You all know that private lotteries are strictly forbidden, and that if you put the case into court you will get imprisoned as well as I, and what is worse you'll never get your prize, because the lottery is worth nothing in

the eyes of the law. I wanted ten thousand roubles, and you wanted the house. Both sides cannot be satisfied."

The ticket-holders went home sadder, and, let us hope, wiser men.

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CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNAL ORGANISATIONS

EDUCATION

THE Polish Jew is very much hampered in the matter of education, so that, in spite of his natural intelligence, he does not become such a good workman as he might. Not only does the Russian Government make it difficult for him to enter the elementary and middle schools; not only is he restricted as to his attendance in the higher schools and universities, but the superstition of the ghetto, which clings to ancient methods of instruction, condemns him to spend long hours in learning things which are of no use to him. He has four ways of obtaining instruction:—

- (1) In the public schools.
- (2) In the *cheders*.
- (3) In the Jewish government schools.
- (4) In the technical schools.

(1) IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In 1887 the then Minister of Public Instruction (Count Delianoff) issued a circular in which the per-

centage of Jews to be received in the middle and higher schools was restricted to the following proportions :—

In St. Petersburg and Moscow to 3 ; in the towns in the interior governments, 5 ; in the towns in Jewish settlement, 10.

The local authorities had begun to diminish the percentage of Jews accepted in the schools before this. For instance, in the educational district of Vilno we find the following diminution in the percentage of Jewish students admitted :—

1882, 26·9 ; 1883, 26·2 ; 1884, 24·9 ; 1885, 23·6 ; 1886, 21·54.

Taking the Universities of Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Kharkow, Odessa, Kieff, Warsaw, Dorpat and Tomsk, the percentage of Jewish students has fallen in thirteen years from 14·8–10·9.

In St. Petersburg it has fallen from 12·7–4·4 ; but Moscow alone, where the latest statistics give 3·5, seems to have kept strictly to the proportion laid down by the circular of 1887.

In the University of Warsaw, the only one in Poland, we find an increase in the percentage of Jewish students received between 1880, when it was 11·6, and 1899, when it had reached 16·8. The number of Jewish candidates who apply for admittance is far in excess of those who gain it. In the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute, of the 97 Jews who presented themselves for the entrance examination, 30 were admitted. In the year 1900, 70 Jews applied for admission to Dorpat and 18 only were

accepted. In Kharkoff, 60 applied and 12 were admitted. But all statistics on this subject are more or less superfluous until the higher educational establishments are re-opened. There is a general feeling that the restrictions under which the Jews have hitherto worked in the schools will then be abolished, together with other civil disabilities. At present it is hard for the Jewish student to gain admittance into the *Gymnasias* and other middle schools. The official proportion is the same as that for the higher schools. Between the years 1881-1894 the actual percentage fell in the Warsaw educational district from 12 to 9.5.

The fact that the middle-class schools are always besieged by more applicants than there is room for, makes it doubly difficult for the Jewish candidates to gain admission. As a general rule, once there, he works well to keep a good place in his class; he is often better prepared than his colleagues who had not the percentage restrictions to fear, and, unlike them, he nearly always goes through the eight classes of the philological or the seven of the mathematical school. It is in considering elementary schools that we come to the important part of education, because eighty per cent. of the Jewish population cannot afford to give their children more than that.

There is no legal restriction as to the admittance of Jewish children into the elementary schools of the country, but complaints are often heard from their parents that applications are refused, and that the most

important part of the course, such as reading or writing, is taught on Saturdays when their children cannot attend. Roughly, the percentage of Jewesses attending the elementary schools is 17, and of boys 12.

Generally speaking, the Jewish parent prefers his children to attend either the *Cheder*, the *Talmud-Tor* or the *Eshibot*. *Talmud-Tor* is practically the same thing as the *Cheder*, except that it is maintained by the Jewish community for the benefit of those children whose parents are too poor to pay for their education. Here the children are fed as well as taught. The *Eshibot* differs from the *Talmud-Tor*, inasmuch as the pupils are older and the foundation larger. As far as instruction is concerned, they scarcely differ from that time-honoured institution, as much a part of the Polish Jew as his *halat*, called the *Cheder*.

(2) THE CHEDER

When the child of the ghetto has reached the age of seven or thereabouts he is sent to the *cheder*, or elementary school, whose origin is wrapped in the dimness of Jewish tradition. The average *cheder* is placed in the typical lodging of the poor Polish Jew. The room also serves as bed and living room for the *melamed*, or master, and his family.¹ The one bed is placed in a corner by the stove; the household gods fill the others, and the pupils, whose number ranges from fourteen to

¹ Over 35% of the *cheders* are kept by men who rent only one room.

thirty, seated on high forms, take up the little space which is left. The room is filled to overflowing. The floor, which is never scrubbed, is a harbour for all kinds of dirt and rubbish, which mingle with the sawdust that is sprinkled upon it from time to time. In winter the stove is only lighted when the cold is too intense to be borne, and the pupils, dressed in their out-door *halats*, are unable to heat the room with their mere animal warmth. In summer the atmosphere is unbearable to all but those bred in it, and even if the windows and doors were opened, no fresh air would come in, for the odours from the courtyard beyond, where the filth and refuse of the neighbourhood are collected, are worse, if possible, than that in the room. The hubbub is as noticeable as the smell, for it is incessant. The *melamed*, in cap and ragged *halat*, reads out a passage from a book, his pupils shrilly repeat it, some quickly, others dragging in long after their neighbours have finished. The *melamed's* wife, busy with unsavoury pans, or tending her offspring, shouts to make herself heard; the elder daughter, a sickly girl, who sews buttons on to ready-made shirts, puts in a remark every now and then; a hunchbacked boy shouts, and the result is such a mixture of sound and smell that one wonders which makes the air the heavier. But neither master nor pupils seem to object to it, and, truth to tell, the *melamed* is no better than his surroundings. He is well on in the forties, and looks like the hundreds of poor Jews one passes in the ghettos of the Polish towns. If he cries

shrilly or makes frantic gestures in his attempt to keep the children quiet, they are too frequent to impress them. Probably his task bores him as it does them, for neither master nor pupil see any goal in the lessons, which are always the same and oral. He has no idea of making them interesting, because he himself does not understand the meaning of the passages he teaches. The poetry of Hebrew scriptures and the wealth of Hebrew history are not for him. He has never been taught their import, empty words and disconnected phrases are all the psalms of Israel's King and the song of his prophets can give him. His qualifications as a teacher are of the poorest. He began to keep a school out of despair, after failing in other walks of ghetto life. Any Jew who has attended a *cheder* in his youth or learned portions of scriptures off by heart at home may turn *melamed* without more preparation. Quondam factors, whose Polish clients have deserted them, small tradesmen gone bankrupt, master bakers and tailors baffled by economic conditions, swell the army of those teachers, from whom the Jewish proletariat culls its education. They cannot enlarge their pupils' minds or fit them to battle with Russian or Polish competition in the workshops because they rarely know any language but Yiddish, and their own minds are as cramped as their native ghettos.

In the *cheders* of Kieff—a fair sample among Jewish settlements—only six per cent. of the teachers can teach any Russian at all. Forty per cent. of these *melameds*

were artisans or stall-keepers, and eighty per cent. have had no better education than that afforded by the *cheder* or the *eshibot*. The method of teaching is as primitive as the other arrangements in the *cheder*. When the *melamed* has gathered his pupils together he divides them into groups according to their ages—one group has a lesson whilst the other amuse themselves as openly as they dare. Except in the rare cases in which the *melamed* keeps an assistant, the other groups have no tasks allotted to them whilst their comrades are being taught, for they have no books, and could not read them if they had. The course is supposed to consist of instruction in writing and reading Hebrew. The writing is generally left out of the programme, and the reading is mostly done by the *melameds* themselves. Some of them try to teach their pupils the rudiments of Russian grammar. I say “try,” because the master knows so little about his subject that his lesson recalls the parable of the blind leading the blind. Both *melamed* and pupil fall into an intellectual ditch, in which they grope for seven, eight, and even ten hours a day, to keep them in which their parents pay from 36s. to 50s. a year, and from which they emerge at the end of four or five years with a small stock of useless knowledge. That is to say, they can repeat a few scriptural texts, in a meaningless way, and know a number of ancient Hebrew words without being able to construe them into sentences, or having any idea of the history from which they are taken. They know nothing of arithmetic or the rudiments of the country’s

language. They have no idea of the world around them. All they are taught of the Gentile and his culture is to hate both. The pity of it is that these centres of ignorance, in which disease is more successfully disseminated than knowledge, and from which Jewish children emerge sickly, stunted, and often deformed, are to be found throughout the ghettos of the Russian Empire. True, their registered number is only 1701. But few *melameds* can afford the expense of the three roubles registration fee, the photograph and testimonials which must accompany all official applications, and they content themselves with taking some twenty pupils without troubling about formalities. The Jewish Colonisation Society, which has done invaluable work in showing up the condition of the Jewish masses in Russia, affirm that the actual number of *cheders* for the Russian Empire is at least 24,540, of which 5,724 are in Poland, which has a Jewish population of 1,306,576. The same authority assumes that on the average one private *cheder* is opened for 199 Jewish inhabitants, and, in the Kingdom of Poland, for 33 Jewish children.

This number is enormous compared with that of voluntary schools maintained by the rest of the community, for it forms 31·2% of the total number of such establishments in Russia, although the Jews form but 4·1% of the whole population. The Mahometans, who form 11% of the whole population, maintain 29·7% of the voluntary schools, whilst the Christian population (84%) maintains 40%. That is to say, the Jews maintain three

times as many voluntary schools as the Mahometan, and fifteen times as many as the Christian population in Russia.

Girls are rarely found in the *cheder*, 5·8% being the average in most places and in still lower percentage in others,¹ but nevertheless 55·8% of the Jewish children who are of a suitable age for attending school go to the *cheders*, and of these some fifty per cent. are the offsprings of parents who earn less than one rouble a day. And yet the *cheder* is not cheap. The fees vary from 18 to 25 roubles a year. Allowing 25,000 *cheders* with an average attendance of 14 pupils, and supposing that they all pay the minimum fee of 18 roubles, we have the sum of 6,300,000 roubles, or about £630,000, annually spent upon a useless education by the poorest part of the population. But, as a matter of fact, the sum is much larger, for we may safely assume that at least one-half of the children pay 20 roubles per year, which brings the budget up to $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions of roubles, the burden of which is borne solely by the Jewish population, and which works out roughly at 150 copecks per head; whereas the rest of the community pay 23 copecks per head for elementary education, which, if it does not come up to the standard of the Western world, is incomparably better than that given in the Jewish *cheders*.

The children of the ghetto cannot get any more education than these establishments afford them. Their

¹ The authorities refuse to allow *cheders* for girls to be established.

parents, taxed to the utmost to keep them at all, send them to work in some sweating shop when they have left the elementary school. But Jewish secondary schools do exist, though their number is much smaller than that of the cheders.

(3) JEWISH GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

In the year 1817 an Imperial Ukaze decreed that Jewish schools under the control of the Government should be established in the Kingdom of Poland. In 1844 these, together with the Jewish communal schools (*Talmud-Tors and Eshibots*) and the Jewish district schools, were brought under the same jurisdiction.

The Jewish Government schools were primarily intended to give Jewish children a general elementary education, together with lessons in Hebrew, religion, writing and reading. A large part of the time was devoted to Hebrew, but the educational authorities appear to have been over-anxious to teach the Jew religion in their own way, and to bring their influence to bear upon the religious life of the Jewish settlements. They ordered Hebrew books of their own choosing to be used in the schools, and appointed teachers who had little or no sympathy with the Jewish element to expound them. The result was that teacher and pupils are entirely out of touch and often at variance upon what the pupils consider the most important part of the school curriculum. According to the latest statistics

there are 130 of these Jewish schools in the Kingdom of Poland and 820 in the Russian Empire. It is computed that one of these schools exists for the accommodation of 5,525 Jewish inhabitants, which means that there are 27 times as many *cheders*. One Jew in 70 attends the Jewish governmental school, whilst one in 13 attends a *cheder*. As far as secular education is concerned, the teachers are fairly well qualified; they have generally gone through one of the teachers' schools. Their pupils complain that their knowledge of Hebrew history is insufficient, and that they are too inclined to sacrifice this part of the educational programme to the other.

In the district boys' schools, which are also under the Government, the teachers are often self-taught and have no accuracy or method. Only one-tenth of their number have finished even the middle schools, and one-sixth of them have no certificates at all. As a matter of fact they are mostly ordinary *melameds*, employed simply because they can teach Hebrew more or less efficiently. Men like them form more than one-third of the staffs of the communal schools.

The girls' schools seem to be better off in the way of teachers, of whom more than two-thirds have finished the middle schools and hold certificates for home teachers.

Nearly all these schools are badly provided with globes, atlases and maps—in fact, many of them can only boast a few of the last, and it is computed that only

one-third of the Jewish schools in the Empire are furnished with globes. Drawing instruments, compasses and rulers are very often conspicuous by their absence.

The fees for the year vary from 11 to 22 roubles. The girls' schools are generally dearer, as the teachers are better prepared and the classes more numerous. In the district schools part of their cost is defrayed by the different Jewish societies.

The parents of children attending most of these schools cannot afford to keep them there for the whole course of study. Many of them are taken away as soon as they learn to read and write, and sent to work in shops and factories. In the government of Warsaw only 3·9% of the scholars go through all the classes.

In the *Talmud-Tors*, where the course extends over from three to four years, and the children are taught for nothing, 5·4% of the girls and 7·8% of the boys finish the course. Their parents look upon it as so much wasted time once they have mastered the art of writing and spelling, and the consequence is that only half as many Jewish children complete the elementary course as the Polish or Russian. This disadvantage is felt as soon as the boys enter factories and works, for the average Jewish artisan has little opportunity of mastering a craft. The trade passes from father to son. When a boy has left the *cheder*, he goes to a master craftsman in the ghetto, who knows very little about his

work. There are many reasons connected with his religious life which prevent him from being apprenticed to a Polish master, and so he misses all the technical part of his trade, and when he has done his term with a co-religionist, he has not learned to work with good materials or to draw or trace his own designs. In fact, he never sees good models, and has not the slightest idea of keeping his work clean or giving any care to its finish. Little wonder, then, that when a boy taught in the average Jewish workshop becomes a master in his turn, he is obliged to confine himself to the poorest and least remunerative work, or, if he enters a Polish shop, is only fit to execute the humblest jobs, and is doomed all his life to be an assistant.

Unfortunately, industrial schools are few and far between in Russia, and the few there are afford little or no space for the Jewish people. The Jewish Communes are already overburdened by self-imposed taxation for the support of elementary schools, to say nothing of hospitals, synagogues and various charitable institutions, all of which have suffered severely during the past two years from the results of the economic crisis which has asserted itself throughout the Empire. It is therefore a matter of surprise that the Jewish community has been able to found the cheap technical schools which, imperfect as they are, exist in some of the Jewish towns and settlements.

(4) TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

These are of three kinds :—

- (1) Technical schools.
- (2) Technical classes.
- (3) Masters' schools.

The course in the technical schools covers a period of three and even four years. Pupils learn the practical part of their trade and drawing as well ; most of them have gone through an elementary school and know how to read and write. The idea of these schools is to turn out good foremen and masters with a thorough knowledge of their work. But the teachers are bad, and have neither a fixed plan nor a programme of the course of instruction.

The Technical Classes are attached to elementary schools, and the work done is more useful in filling up the time left over from the general programme than anything else ; at least four-sevenths of the school day is spent on elementary education, leaving the rest for instruction in trades, which is given without method. In 40% of these classes no drawing or tracing is taught at all. They have not given the results which were expected. In many of them the pupils are only taught handicrafts, and leave without any knowledge of mechanics. In others, orders are received, but as a rule, the pupils do not execute them. The girls' classes are confined to teaching plain sewing and knitting.

In the *Masters' Schools* the teaching of trade takes the foremost place. Pupils of both sexes have the opportunity of devoting the greater part of their time to practical work. A good deal of attention is paid to instruction in drawing and tracing, but the fact that many pupils who do not know how to read or write are admitted hinders progress, especially in designing and executing the more complicated and finished work.

The teaching staff of these schools does not stand high. The teachers are often themselves ignorant of the technical part of their work. They have had no training but what the Jewish shops can afford them. It is a very rare thing to find teachers in the girls' schools who have been through a course in the industrial schools, either in Russia or abroad; they know next to nothing of the subject they attempt to teach, and often have not as much as a qualifying certificate from the elementary schools.

The lack of good teachers is especially evident in classes in which carpentry, sewing and metal working are taught. The lack of good Jewish masters for weaving, ceramic work and modelling is such that these crafts cannot be introduced into the school curriculum, a fact which debars the Jew from competing with the Pole in these branches. But, bad as these schools are, the pupils rarely finish them.¹ In the majority (60%) of cases this is owing to the poverty of the parents—in 17% to the

¹ 28% in boys', and 24% in girls' schools.

inaptitude of the pupils. This latter reason is not so general among boys as girls.

When we consider the above facts, it is not difficult to understand why thousands of Jewish youths, without any education, utterly unable to cope with modern economic conditions, are, by their backwardness or ignorance, a weight upon the communal organisations which look after the Jewish poor as far as their limited resources permit.

These organisations include the Commune, the *Kahal*, and the *Rabbinat*.

THE COMMUNE, THE *KAHAL*, AND THE *RABBINAT*

Although, as will be seen later on, Jewish Communes and *Kahals* existed in Poland many hundreds of years ago, the date of Jewish local government as recognised by law is generally put as the year 1821, when the following regulations were passed:—

(1) The Jews of each town to organise a Commune in which the executive body shall be elected by all members of the Jewish community who pay a tax.

(2) The executive body to fix the amount of the tax according to the financial resources of the several members of the community.

(3) The money thus collected to be expended upon religious culture, education and charity.

The executive body of a Jewish Commune is known as a *Kahal*; except in Warsaw and Petersburg, where the

word has been dropped for another term which is best translated by the words "Executive Committee." The power and influence of the old *Kahals* were proverbial. To-day, though many changes have taken place, the executive body of a Jewish Commune plays a large part in the life of the Jews, and is in many ways a bureaucratic institution which is now meeting with a lot of criticism from certain parties in the Jewish communities. This is especially observable in the big towns, and I have chosen the Commune of Warsaw because of its large field of work and the various parties which are trying to influence the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee of the average Commune consists of fourteen members, elected every three years by the Jewish community. In Warsaw, only those who pay an annual tax of at least fifteen roubles have a vote, but the rate is much lower in the smaller towns, and varies with the size and prosperity of the community. Women are excluded from the elections and men can vote by proxy.

According to the prescribed regulations, the candidate who obtains the largest number of votes becomes President of the Committee. This does not work well in the larger Communes, and at Warsaw the leader is chosen by the Committee in the following way. They decide upon the man they want to lead them, and if he has fewer votes than another, the latter gives his up until a majority is obtained.

The President of the Town then confirms the Communal President's election, and presents a list of Committee for the Governor-General's assent. The Vice-President is chosen unofficially by the Committee.

The Commune of Warsaw has asked the Government to introduce the following reforms:—

(1) To allow every man who pays the smallest communal subscription to vote at the elections.

(2) To increase the number of the Executive Committee to eighteen, with three for replacing members who may be absent.

(3) To accord the Executive Committee the right to elect its own president.

The Government has refused to consider this request until local government has been established.

The Executive Committee meets once a week to discuss business and pass resolutions. In Warsaw their decisions are carried out by thirty-two officials; two hundred and fifteen clerks being employed by the Commune. The duties of the Committee are multifarious. With the aid of sub-committees, chosen from among the fourteen members, it imposes the tax known as the communal subscription upon the community, controls the expenditure in connection with the synagogues, schools, hospitals, etc., appoints clerks in the different institutions, has control of the communal estate, real and personal, distributes the monies voluntarily subscribed for charitable purposes, and governs the

educational, economic and charitable institutions in connection with the Commune.

In Warsaw all this business is divided into eleven departments, which respectively control—

General Business,	The Budget,	Charitable Institutions,
Taxation,	Schools,	Workshops,
Loan Bank,	Pawnshop,	Legal Department,
and the suburb of Praga.		

Each department is composed of a president, vice-president, and one member, who discuss their business before bringing it before the general weekly meetings. The department in control of the finances is responsible for the annual budget, a report of which is presented to the President of the Town and finally sent to the Ministry of the Interior. At the time of writing, the statistics for the year 1905 are not ready, but the following figures give some idea of the way in which the Jewish Commune at Warsaw expends the money which passes through its hands. The figures are extracts from the financial report for the year 1904, and have been kindly given by a member of the Executive Committee.

The Commune possesses twelve buildings, not counting the Jewish hospital in the Wola district, built at a cost of £120,000. The expenditure and income in 1904 amounted to nearly £31,000. In the year 1878 the funds of the Commune amounted to £3,790, they are now worth £70,500. There is a reserve fund of £3,750.

COMMUNAL ORGANISATIONS

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EXPENDITURE.				INCOME.			
			£				£
Education	9,000	Taxes	15,600
Charity	8,100	Contributions	6,780
Hospital, Orphanage,				Cemetery Dues...	...	...	3,000
Alms-houses, etc.	...	...	4,150	Legacies	...	...	4,000
Maintenance of Cemetery	...	...	3,180	Various	...	...	1,600
Various	...	...	4,050				
Obligations	...	...	2,000				
Total	...		<u>£30,480</u>	Total	...		<u>£30,980</u>

These figures are enormous when we take into consideration that only a very small proportion of the Jewish community can pay anything at all towards communal expenses. According to the calculations of the Executive Committee, the Commune contains 65,000 families with an average number of five members, and of these, barely 10,000 heads of families can pay any tax or contribution at all. Of this number again, only one-third pay more than thirty shillings annually.

As no municipal aid whatever is given, the well-to-do members of the Commune have to bear the burden of the maintenance of the various expenses enumerated on the table.

Lately, the tax, which is fixed by the Committee according to the financial resources of the several members of the community, has been increased, as more than 300 heads of families have been unable to continue to pay their communal subscription in consequence of the depression which now prevails in all branches of business.

At first sight it seems rather arbitrary treatment on

the part of the Committee to decide how large a tax each member of the Commune must pay, and many members of the Commune complain of the Committee's despotism in this respect as in others. But an incident which occurred quite recently seems to point to the fact that great care is exercised to ascertain the real amount of a man's income before the tax is levied on him.

A Jew complained to the President of the Town that his Commune had levied too high a tax upon him. When the affair was looked into, the Executive Committee satisfied the authorities that the evidence of a delegate from the income tax officials is always taken and carefully sifted before a tax is levied, that when a member of the Commune appeals, his case is considered again, and if it transpires that he has been too highly assessed, the amount is lowered. The Committee also showed that the Jew in question was quite able to pay the tax, and had appealed without sufficient reason.

The larger Communes maintain various charitable and educational institutions, such as crèches, orphanages, alms-houses, asylums for idiots and elementary schools. These institutions, although quite insufficient to meet the demand, do much to better the condition of the sick and indigent and to raise children above the level of the ghetto.

The crèches take a small sum from the mothers of the babies who are left there. The orphanages and schools are free. In the orphanages children between the ages of two and seven are taught habits of cleanliness

and order, attend a sort of Kindergarten class, where they play games, sing Polish songs, and do easy physical drill. The healthy conditions under which these children are reared, the large rooms and the appearance of the inmates compared with those who crowd the streets of the Jewish quarter, make one regret that only 1,000 children in all can be accommodated.

At the age of seven the girls are sent to a sewing school and the boys to one of the communal *Talmud-Tors*. These schools are very different from those described above. Though their number is necessarily limited, they well bear comparison with similar institutions in Europe, and are even better managed, as far as attention to hygienic conditions is concerned, than many in richer and more civilised countries. The pupils are taught Polish, Russian and Arithmetic. Each child is clothed, fed and—an attention not every child of well-to-do Polish parents receives—sent to a bath twice a month. The Commune has no official permission to teach Polish, and its request to be allowed to establish a teachers' college has been refused. The Government, true to its policy of Russification, would give a concession on one condition, that is the employment of Russian and orthodox teachers. The Commune, partly because many of its members are sincerely attached to Polish culture, partly because the children in the elementary schools must be fitted to compete with Polish and not Russian rivals in the mills and workshops, will not hear of this. The consequence is that, although

the grounding is infinitely better and the course more comprehensive than that in the *Cheders* and *Talmud-Tors* over which the time-honoured *melamed* presides, the teaching is far from what the men and women interested in these schools would like it to be.

Then there are trade classes which give instruction to 1,800 boys and 210 girls; and here again the Commune is cramped for lack of funds. These elementary schools have been started by the Communes at Lodz, Piotrkoff, Plock, Czenstochova, and Lomza.

There are also two Jewish schools of farming in the Kingdom of Poland, one near Warsaw, on the estate of Mr. Bersohn, with a hundred pupils, the other at Czenstochova, with thirty pupils. The teachers are Poles, and after finishing the course of instruction, the pupils obtain situations as managers and bailiffs on estates belonging to rich Jews.

During the past two years an asylum for the deaf and dumb has been established by the Warsaw Commune. In this and a few other large Communes evening classes are held for youths engaged during the day in the Jewish workshops and factories. Lessons are given three times a week in Polish and Russian, and on Saturdays, religion.

In the Warsaw Commune from 140 to 160 boys are received into these schools free of charge. Besides these *Talmud-Tors*, trade classes and evening schools, the Warsaw Commune maintains fourteen elementary schools at an annual cost of £3,100.

The charitable institutions do good work and have been much appreciated by the Jewish poor since the Universal Strike of the autumn of 1905 brought thousands of the proletariat face to face with starvation. Cartloads of potatoes, flour, etc., to say nothing of warm clothing, were distributed free by committees appointed for the purpose. Two establishments which have always to turn away applicants for want of funds are the pawnbroker's shop and the loan bank. The pawnbroker's shop advances money free of interest upon articles of clothing, furniture, jewellery, etc. More than £4,140 was lent in this way in Warsaw alone during the winter 1905-6. The loan bank in the same Commune lends sums varying from £5 to £20 to artisans and small tradesmen. The Jewish hospital, alms-houses, and asylum for idiots, though connected with the Commune are not under its complete control, being managed by separate committees.

The Executive Committee is generally composed of Conservatives, who cling to all the old Hebrew traditions, and would exclude secular education from the school curriculum; Moderates, anxious to combine the two in equal proportions; and the Progressives, bent upon bringing the organisations of the Commune up to modern standards.

At the last elections, which took place a couple of years ago, the Sionists made their appearance for the first time, much to the concern of the other parties, who have no sympathy with the movement, and although neither of the three candidates was elected, the number

of votes they received warned the Committee that they may prove to be an element to be reckoned with at the next elections.

Apart from political opinions, which are fully represented in the Commune, there is a large party at Warsaw which clamours for reforms in the general plan of communal administration, and especially in the Executive Committee. This party has been grumbling in a suppressed way for some years, but during the last few months its voice has been heard in louder tones, and there is no doubt that the agitation will bear fruit at the next elections. One of the party, a man whom his colleagues generally choose as spokesman, boldly criticises the Executive Committee. Among other things he says :—" At present the whole business of the Commune is managed by a small committee of fourteen men, who levy taxes, take cemetery dues, appoint clerks and officials in the communal institutions, and what is more than all this, dispose of the communal funds without consulting the wishes of those who have subscribed the money, controlling the expenditure of all the charitable, educational and economical institutions. This Executive Committee acts in an autocratic manner, and passes all resolutions without the concurrence, and often without the knowledge, of the Jewish community. I even venture to affirm that the way in which they spend the communal monies, without the consent of the other members of the Commune, is illegal, for, by a circular published by the Committee of Religious Faiths and Public Education in

the year 1830, and by a further regulation, issued in the year 1852, it was decreed that all monies given for the maintenance of "Houses of Prayer" (synagogues), Rabbinate, hospitals, charitable institutions, cemeteries, etc., must be disposed of according to the wishes of the majority of the members of the Commune. The Executive Committee does not comply with this regulation. It seems clear that it was drawn up in order that all the members of the Commune might have a voice in the expenditure of their money. These people are obliged to pay taxes levied by the Committee, whether they will or not, and all the privilege they get in return is the right of electing a body of men to dispose of their contributions, and even this privilege, if it is one, is denied to a very large proportion of the community, because of the high tax necessary for a vote. These arrangements are contrary to the most elementary ideas of democratic government. But as a matter of fact, the Executive Committee of the Commune is a despotic organisation, for, with the exception of the local magistrate, who is its nominal chief, and, *de facto*, never interferes, it is under nobody's control, and responsible to none for its actions. This does not matter so much in the small towns, where the whole Commune consists of a few hundred members, whose ideas and aims are about the same, and who may, by taking an interest in the activity of the *Kahal*, manage to suppress any autocratic tendencies. But the case is very different in a large town like Warsaw, where the Jewish Commune, the largest on the Continent, contains

over 300,000 members, who hold various views, from Chassidism to the most advanced Socialism. The management of such a Commune should be in the hands, not of fourteen men, but of a much larger body enjoying the confidence of every class and every shade of opinion in the Commune. Moreover, this body ought to be a permanent institution, and the Executive Committee ought to respect its decisions as the expression of public opinion. The number of members of the Committee should be increased to twenty-four, and a group of representatives, elected by the Commune, ought to control its movements. These representatives should have the power of inspecting the budget, of organising a taxation committee, of electing Rabbis from among the candidates who present themselves, and of representing the Commune in all subsidiary institutions. The deliberations of these representatives should be open to any of those members of the Commune who wish to attend, and the Executive Committee should be obliged to present them with a full report of business done during the year. These arrangements would do much to increase the usefulness of the Commune and develop its possibilities, as well as repressing the bureaucratic tendencies of the Executive Committee. At present the Jewish press only publishes as much of the Communal reports as the Committee cares to give, and it follows that they are scanty of facts and rich in praise of that body's good qualities. Only inspired organs publish an account of its proceedings. This is not the case in

Western Europe, and in Vienna the committee meetings are open to the Jewish community.

“ All those who speak enthusiastically of the activity of the Jewish Communes in Poland and in the rest of the Russian Empire make one great mistake, that is, they compare the Communes here with those in other parts of the world. They forget the enormous difference in the conditions under which the Jews live here and in other countries. There, their numbers are much smaller and their financial position better. There, the Jewish Communes confine their activity to building synagogues, keeping up cemeteries, attending to ritualistic observances, and in rare cases to building hospitals, almshouses, and orphanages. But in Poland the case is very different. Thanks to political and social conditions, and partly also to Talmudism, the Jews in Poland have preserved their exclusiveness. At one time, when Poland was a purely agricultural country, the Jews formed the commercial class. Now that agriculture has to a great extent given way to industry, they are obliged to earn their living as artisans. This is not at all easy for them; the few national schools the country possesses do not take Jewish pupils willingly, and the corporations, clinging to old traditions, exclude Jews. The consequence is that they are bad artisans and mechanics. Their bad health and the different religious observances are also against their taking a good place in the industrial world. Unfortunately, their physical deterioration is on the increase, and in a country in which the Jewish masses live under such

adverse conditions as in Poland, the Communes ought to do something more than manage cemeteries, slaughter-houses, and the *mykva* (ritualistic bath). They ought to look after the moral, physical, and economic development of the community, and fit it to compete with its rivals. The schools are badly in want of funds, and the management of the hospital in Warsaw is on a par with the relations between the subscribers and the Committee. The Jewish community gives thousands of roubles to keep up this hospital, which is under the control of one man, the Curator. The patients are always complaining of the food, and, if the evidence of doctors who are not on the regular staff is to be believed, the complaints are not altogether unjust. The hospital servants are so badly paid that only a very inferior class of person will take the situations, and the consequence is that the patients are badly nursed and fed. Besides this, the accommodation is quite insufficient. Years ago, when the Jewish population in Warsaw did not exceed 30,000, there were 400 beds; to-day there are only 500, which means that, whereas the population has increased by 900 per cent., the number of beds has increased by 90 per cent., and this in spite of a great increase in sickness, caused by bad food and dwellings and increased poverty. The hospital should be under the complete control of the Jewish Commune, which should also take steps to establish a sanatorium to meet the growing scourge of consumption and the prevalence of nervous diseases among the inhabitants of the ghetto. But of course,

these are all questions which can only be satisfactorily solved when local government, in the widest sense of the term, has been given to the towns and to the Communes as well. At any rate, Jewish opinion has been aroused of late, and the days of a bureaucratic Executive Committee are numbered."

The mere observer wonders where all the money is to come from if sweeping reforms are to be made by a community of which only a small fraction can afford to pay anything at all for its various institutions. As far as elementary education is concerned, the abolition of the *cheders* and their substitution by elementary schools of a modern type would cost the parents of the children who use them no more than they now pay. The difficulty would be to overcome the Conservative views of the parents, who look upon the *melamed* as a sacred institution, and rarely think their children ought to learn anything but Talmudic lore.

In contrast to this reform party, the Executive Committee of the Warsaw Commune encounters opposition in another direction from two other sources—the Russian authorities, who seem bent upon doing all they can to prevent the civilised Jews from raising their uncivilised masses above their present level, and the Conservative members of the Commune, who would like the Jewish youth to live in a Talmudistic atmosphere, where his mental range is bounded by the *Beth-Hamidrash* or the *Talmud-Tors*. Quite recently the Zionists sent delegates to one of the Communal orphanages and asked

the Superintendent what she taught the children under her charge. When she told them they asked what language they sang in? "Polish" was the answer. "Why don't you teach them their own jargon?" her visitors asked. The woman said she did not know any jargon, at which they told her she ought to be ashamed of herself for not knowing her own language, and that they would soon find means of replacing her by somebody who did.

As for the policy of the Russian authorities, it is prompted, as an official in Warsaw remarked in a moment of expansion, by fear of the Jew, who is clever and likely to prove a formidable rival if given equal chances. The day of equal chances is, the Jewish revolutionaries say, not far off, and though the Executive Committee of the Warsaw Commune is far from sharing their political opinions, it, and the similar institutions in several other large towns, do what they can to fit the Jewish masses for the unequal fight against prevailing economic conditions. The Conservative members of the Commune cry out against the assimilating influence of the elementary schools, in which the children are taught Polish instead of the jargon of the ghetto, and where secular education takes up a large part of the children's time. The Sionists have much the same complaints to make, and those Rabbis who know no Polish, and are therefore excluded from the livings in the Communal gift, join in the criticism.

Whatever mistakes and shortcomings the Commune

of Warsaw may make, the stranger who sees their efforts to raise at least a small fraction of the Jewish poor from their present misery and fit a few children to earn decent wages, and takes into consideration the opposition from within and without, to say nothing of the lack of sufficient funds, cannot but admire the courage with which the difficulties are overcome and the wisdom with which the money is spent in the good work.

The Rabbinat is in connection with the Commune. At one time the Commune of Warsaw possessed only one chief Rabbi, but a college of Rabbis, known as the Rabbinat, has now been in existence for the past twenty-five years. There are twelve Rabbis in the Rabbinat, corresponding in numbers to the twelve wards into which the town is divided. Each Rabbi presides over the Rabbinat for a month, according to the Jewish calendar. Each of these Rabbis has his own synagogue, where he performs all the duties in connection with his parish. The registers of marriages and births are kept by him, but are inspected by a commission appointed by the Executive Committee. This supervision has been found necessary, because the Jewish poor ignore the regulations in connection with births and marriages, and, if it were not for the vigilance of the Commune, many marriages would be considered invalid by the Russian authorities. These Rabbis do not attend any special school or pass an examination. They study in the *Beth-Hamidrash* until they think they know

enough of the Talmud and the Law, when they go to some of the Rabbinat with a certificate of efficiency and ask them to sign it. The more signatures the certificate has, the better qualified the Rabbi is supposed to be.

The Executive Committee tries to appoint only such Rabbis to the communal synagogues as have a knowledge of Polish and at least some idea of the country in which they live. This is by no means easy, and the need of a seminary is badly felt. Besides the twelve communal synagogues, there are 380 "Houses of Prayer" in Warsaw alone, placed in small rooms in the ghetto, where studious youths listen to the harangues of some Rabbi and pore over obscure passages in the Talmud. There are several hundred such Rabbis in a Commune of moderate size, and in Warsaw, at any rate, the Committee is always waging war with the unsanitary condition in which their "Houses of Prayer" are kept; but, as usual, the police decline to interfere, and these hotbeds of disease continue to multiply.

Years ago the Communal Rabbis were much more powerful than they are now. But during the last three decades, in spite of bitter opposition from the Rabbis themselves and from the Conservatives, their influence has weakened, and secular business now occupies much of the time which was formerly devoted to questions of ritual and spiritual education.

Although the growth of Socialistic parties has done much to weaken the rabbinical power in the larger Communes, it is still in evidence in the smaller towns

and provincial settlements, and in such places a delinquent will confess his guilt to a Rabbi when he has denied it to everybody else.

A short time ago a lot of excitement was caused among the Jews in a small town by the fact that a train, filled with emigrants bound for America, was searched by the police, who arrested the passengers and confiscated their ship-tickets. The Rabbi was appealed to, and found out that the police had been informed that the emigrants were political offenders, escaping from Lithuania. A search was made for the traitor, and suspicion pointed to a Jewish emigration agent, who denied all knowledge of the affair. But when the Rabbi questioned him, he admitted that he had denounced the emigrants because they had booked their passage through another agent, and he had sworn to be revenged.

A few weeks afterwards another case came to my knowledge; this time a graver offence had been committed. Some Jewish merchants had been murdered on the high-road near Lodz, and the man who was driving them said that the assassins were also Jews. The police did not make any arrests, and the local Rabbi determined to settle the question of the murderers' identity for himself, and as he could not get any information by making inquiries in the usual way among his flock, he told all the Jews in the town to shut up their shops and go to the synagogue on Monday morning. When the building was full, the trumpeters attached to

the synagogue blew their trumpets, and the Rabbi called upon all who knew anything about the murderers to come forward. One man gave himself up at once, and some others showed the Rabbi where the rest of the band were hiding. Before the day was over all the assassins were given over to the police.

The Rabbi at Lodz, an old man who has been there for over thirty years, is quite a despot and makes all sorts of rules which the Jews have to obey. His latest invention is a licence for selling milk, for which he makes the Jewish dairyman pay five shillings a month. As few of them make as much as five shillings profit in the time, the complaints against the hard-hearted Rabbi are many and frequent; but as he forbids any Jew to sell milk without his permission, they have to pay it, or retire from the business.

The following incident occurred in Warsaw during the winter of 1905-6. A Jew named N. lent a Rabbi one hundred roubles on a bill, and as he could not get his money back again at the end of the term agreed upon, he went to law about it and obtained an order to seize the Rabbi's furniture. But his triumph was short-lived, for the same evening ten men, armed with revolvers and knives, went to his lodging and forced him to sign a declaration that the Rabbi had paid the hundred roubles. This done, they beat N. and his wife and departed with the declaration.

Another instance of the authority of the Rabbi occurred

a short time ago. A case was brought before a court-martial in which several Jews were accused of killing a policeman, or a *straznik ziemski*, that is a man who performs the duties of a policeman in the country districts. They were sentenced to death on the evidence of some false witnesses, also Jews; and the sentence was finally remitted. But the Rabbi of the place in which the accused Jews lived sent a telegram to the Head Rabbi in Palestine, where the false witnesses had escaped, directing him to call them to the synagogue to make a full confession, under oath, before the Russian Consul. They did so, and thanks to the Rabbi's interference, the case was satisfactorily cleared up.

Nevertheless, political organisations have obtained a firm footing in the ghetto, and play an important part in the current affairs of Poland.